

GRATEFUL OR SLIMY?
THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL HIERARCHY ON THE WITNESS-RECIPIENT
DIFFERENCE IN PERCEPTIONS OF AUTHENTIC GRATITUDE

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ABSTRACT

Ayana N. Younge: Grateful or Slimy? The Influence of Social Hierarchy on the Witness-Recipient Difference in Perceptions of Authentic Gratitude
(Under the direction of Shimul Melwani)

Innumerable findings have highlighted the unique benefits of the positive emotion of gratitude, especially in interpersonal relationships. However, how might these outcomes change if one's gratitude expression is perceived as inauthentic? This dissertation explores when and why gratitude expressions may be perceived inauthentically in organizations. Findings demonstrate that in a context of social hierarchy, the relative power between the expresser and the recipient influences the difference between a recipient and third-party witness' perception of authentic gratitude. After reporting initial evidence for the potential differences in perceptions of authenticity of upward and downward gratitude expressions, across three empirical studies, I provide supporting evidence for this claim by showing that witnesses of upward gratitude perceive those expressions as less authentic than recipients do, and that this is mediated by the witness's tendency to make instrumental attributions for low-power individuals' expressions of gratitude. However, this relationship is not supported in the case of downward gratitude expressions. Results also show that there are interpersonal consequences for the expressers—perceivers indicate a lower interest in affiliating with those they perceive as inauthentic.

To my founding triad— the individuals who have loved me unconditionally, been the drivers of my ambition, and fueled my passions— to you, Maumau, Papa, and Mom.

The completion of this dissertation serves as a symbol of our human resilience. Even in the midst of a pandemic, we find strength, peace, and *gratitude*.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Innumerable findings have highlighted gratitude's distinct benefits as a positive emotion (Emmons & McCullough, 2004), both for the individual experiencing *and* expressing gratitude. For those experiencing gratitude, this felt emotion enables them to deal with stressful situations and appreciate positive experiences (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Feeling grateful has also been shown to motivate prosocial behavior and build and strengthen relationships (McCullough et al., 2008; Algoe et al., 2008). Interpersonally, gratitude expressers are more likely to be helped by their benefactors (McCullough et al., 2001), and receiving an expression of gratitude leads people to demonstrate greater prosocial behavior toward the expresser, such as increased helping and affiliative behavior (Grant & Gino, 2010; Rind & Bordia, 1995; Williams & Bartlett, 2015). At work, gratitude has also been shown to have similarly positive effects. For instance, in a recent poll of 2,000 Americans, almost all respondents reported that saying "thank you" made them feel happier and more fulfilled at work (Simon-Thomas & Smith, 2013). Moreover, grateful individuals take fewer sick days, report higher job satisfaction, and engage in more helping behaviors compared to less grateful individuals (Kaplan et al., 2014; Waters, 2012; Winslow et al., 2017).

While we know that saying "thank you" goes a long way, a crucial question remains: are all "thank-you's" perceived the same? Initial evidence shows that positive emotion expression may not always reap social benefits; instead, the context and perceptions of how authentic that emotion is plays a role in its interpersonal outcomes (Greenaway et al., 2018). I use emotions-as-social-information theory (EASI; Van Kleef, 2009), which highlights that people use others'

emotional expressions as social information about the expresser's psychological states and behavioral intentions (Van Kleef, 2009) and that these inferences then help coordinate future interactions toward the expresser (Algoe et al., 2019; Fischer et al., 2003), to explicate these effects for expressions of gratitude. Importantly, this theoretical perspective highlights that perceptions of emotional authenticity play a critical role in the inferential processes that follow these emotional expressions (Grandey et al., 2005; Van Kleef, 2010). As such, observers perceive how authentic, genuine, and sincere someone's emotional expressions are (Salmela & Mayer, 2009); however, there may be circumstances in which observers do not believe the expresser truly felt the expressed emotion, perhaps when there is an alternative motive to explain the expresser's behavior. Thus, there may be situations under which this occurs and these judgments of inauthenticity may have far-reaching consequences, affecting the extent to which observers choose to affiliate with the expresser.

According to the EASI model, inferences following emotional expressions are influenced by social context (Van Kleef, 2010) and two primary contextual conditions, the relative power between the expresser and receiver (Hess et al., 2000; Van Kleef, 2009), and the role, or perspective, of the perceiver (witness versus recipient), shape these perceptions (Hareli & Rafaeli, 2008). Notably, power and perspective are embedded features within organizations (Ashkanasy, 2003; Hareli & Rafaeli, 2008; Magee & Galinky, 2008). Hence, a deeper exploration of how this positive emotion of gratitude influences our behaviors at work, is needed. Furthermore, because we greatly value authenticity and are evaluators of others' emotional authenticity constantly (Salmela & Mayer, 2009), this work advances the emotional authenticity literature by demonstrating that the perceived authenticity of gratitude is meaningfully influenced when it is expressed within the context of organizations. This context creates a

situation in which gratitude may be perceived as inauthentic, and similar to prior research that highlights negative outcomes for inauthentic emotional displays (Grandey et al., 2015), the inauthentic gratitude expresser may also face unfavorable consequences. As such, the dynamics of social hierarchy and multiple perspectives that exist within organizations create an environment in which the benefits and outcomes of expressing and receiving gratitude may not be as straightforward and uniform as those acknowledged in prior research.

In terms of the first contextual feature, social hierarchy, I propose that gratitude expressed from a low-power individual to their high-power counterpart will be perceived as less authentic than gratitude expressed in the opposing direction. In general, while little work has explored how the complexities of gratitude are influenced by hierarchical dynamics, some previous research suggests that emotional expressions in fact elicit assumptions of hierarchical position. For example, people who express anger (versus sadness) are afforded higher status (Tiedens, 2000), as are those who express contempt and compassion (Melwani et al., 2012). Moreover, hierarchies constrain emotional expressions and provide expectations for behavior based on one's position in the hierarchy. For example, high power is associated with greater experience and expression of positive emotion, while those with low power experience and express more negative emotions that cement their position in the hierarchy (Berdahl & Martorana, 2006; Keltner et al., 2003). Research also suggest that high-power, compared to low-power individuals, feel greater freedom to express their true feelings (Berdahl & Martorana, 2006; Hecht & LaFrance, 1998) and act in accordance with their actual personalities (Chen et al., 2001). Low power individuals, in contrast, are more likely to enact behaviors that fulfil status norms (Martin & Wilson, 2012), like ingratiation and brown-nosing—likeable behaviors that are directed toward superiors and may be viewed as *slimy* (Vonk, 1998). Additionally, low-power

individuals may tend to utilize more submissive emotions than high-power individuals in order to maintain and justify the status hierarchy (Tiedens et al., 2000; Plant et al., 2000). Frequently, these strategies are also used to please high-power others, and thus, the use of gratitude may be seen as more strategic and less authentic. In turn, I argue that gratitude expressed within a social hierarchy may be perceived as more or less authentic depending on the expresser's rank relationship—relative power and/or status—with the recipient. Specifically, gratitude expressed upward (i.e. from a low-power to a high-power individual) may be perceived as less authentic than gratitude expressed downward (i.e. from a high-power to a low-power individual).

Next, I further qualify these perceptions of gratitude in organizations by also investigating how the relative power of the expresser influences the perspective of the perceivers differently. While most research in emotions explores the dynamics between expressers and recipients, a third perspective, that of the third-party observer, or witness, has been lacking in emotion research. Third-party witnesses are often involved in the perceptions of emotional expressions in the workplace (Hareli & Rafaeli, 2008) and they are more attuned to the social motives of others (Goffman, 1955; Van Kleef, 2009). I draw from the impression management literature to explain why I hypothesize that gratitude expressions have a different effect on third-party witnesses, compared to recipients, in social hierarchies. Specifically, I argue that witnesses may make external attributions for a person's expression, while recipients may make internal attributions. Witnesses might be more focused on the situational causes of one's expression, such as the power differentials between the expresser and recipient. Since it is plausible that low-power individuals would have more of an alternative motive than high-power individuals to express gratitude, given their fundamental need to advance in rank (Anderson et al., 2015), witnesses may be especially more attuned to these situational motives than recipients. Therefore,

witnesses will be more biased toward making instrumental attributions for upward gratitude expressers, which will then lead to perceptions of inauthenticity and a lower desire to affiliate with the low-power expresser.

This dissertation offers three major contributions to the understanding of gratitude expressions in organizations, thus advancing the literature on the intersection of emotions and social hierarchy. First, little work has explored different factors that influence the perceived authenticity of gratitude and it is critical to investigate the role of authentic emotions in organizations (Van Kleef et al., 2012). Building on his, we know that *inauthentic* emotional displays may have several consequences and be perceived as manipulative attempts to influence the target of the expression (Côté et al., 2013). I introduce how relative power and perspectives within a social hierarchy are two potential boundary conditions to perceiving when gratitude is authentic or not.

Second, I integrate the power and positive emotions literatures by demonstrating that hierarchical structures and the relative power between individuals affects emotion perceptions. Theoretical (Keltner et al., 2003) and empirical (Berdahl & Montano, 2006) research related to power has established that power increases our intrapersonal experience and expression of positive emotions, but only a small body of research has explored how these positive emotions are perceived when expressed within relationships characterized by power differentials, relationships that are inherent in our social world (Magee & Galinsky, 2008). I draw from theories related to power and status dynamics (Anderson et al., 2015; Keltner et al., 2003) to aid in the advancement of a more intricate examination of positive emotions, namely, gratitude.

Last, I progress research on the influence of emotional displays in organizations by bringing the third-party witness perspective to the forefront. I aim to show that perceptions of

authenticity may vary depending on whether a recipient, or a witness, is evaluating the expression, and this is important because we live in a world where we observe others' emotional displays constantly, and recent theory suggests that witnessed emotions may help coordinate outcomes in groups (Algoe et al., 2019). Given the extensive influence that emotional expressions have on organizational behavior particularly (Koning & Van Kleef, 2015; Morris & Keltner, 2000; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; Van Kleef et al., 2012; see Elfenbein, 2007 for a review), and on individuals who are not directly involved in the emotional exchange (Algoe et al., 2019), it is necessary to explore the differences that arise when one is the witness versus a recipient of the expression, and explore why that might occur.

Taken together, I will offer evidence to suggest that not all thank-you's are perceived equally. Instead, I offer propositions about the contexts in which gratitude expressers are perceived to be instrumentally motivated, and argue specifically that this occurs when it is expressed from a low-power to high-power person in the social hierarchy. I also argue that witnesses may especially choose to affiliate less with low-power gratitude expressers because they make instrumental attributions for their behavior, and thus perceive them as less authentic than downward gratitude expressers.

In the following pages, I draw on theories related to gratitude, perceived authenticity, social hierarchy, third-party witnessing, and impression management to formulate my hypotheses. Then, to first establish the plausibility of my account, I present results from a preliminary study in which I tested whether witnesses perceived upward gratitude expressions as less authentic than downward gratitude expressions. Next, I test my formal predictions across three empirical studies. In my first study, I examine how individuals perceive an expression of gratitude in a hypothetical work scenario where it is expressed from an employee to a supervisor,

or supervisor to an employee. Individuals reading this scenario were told to imagine themselves as the recipient or a witness of this gratitude expression. In my second study, I replicate the general findings from Study 1 using the same procedures and introduce a potential mechanism, instrumental attributions, for the expresser's behavior, which explains why witnesses of gratitude expressed from an employee to a supervisor may perceive them as the least authentic. In my final study, I test my hypotheses in a more controlled, realistic, laboratory setting. Here, individuals entered into a "work group", assuming different roles of power and communicating with one another via a written exchange of notecards. The aim of the study was to generalize my findings related to instrumental attributions and perceived authenticity in a different sample and explore if the negative consequences associated with low-power expressers would extend to different, yet related, affiliation outcomes. Following, I detail the methods and results of these three experiments, which aim to test my predictions centered on the phenomenon of authentic gratitude in organizations.

CHAPTER 2: GRATITUDE

Gratitude: Definition, Characteristics and Functions

In taking a social functional approach toward emotions (Keltner & Haidt, 1999) and considering gratitude's unique role in interpersonal relationships, I draw from previous research, which has defined gratitude as *a positive emotion that can be experienced when an individual appraises that another person, or source, did something to intentionally benefit the self* (Algoe & Haidt, 2009; Emmons & McCullough, 2004; Ortony et al., 1988; Tsang, 2007). Building on this, the behavioral manifestation of this emotional experience is an *expression* of gratitude (Algoe et al., 2016). While the focus of this dissertation is on the emotional expression and implications of gratitude, I first describe its overarching phenomenology and characteristics, and then highlight the key function of gratitude that is the theoretical driver of my hypotheses.

First, early work has defined gratitude as “the willingness to recognize unearned increments of value in one's experience” (Bertocci & Millard, 1963, p. 389). Feeling grateful has also been described simply as being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). It has also been defined as a feeling of appreciation in response to an experience that is beneficial to, but not attributable to, the self (Emmons & McCullough, 2004; Fehr et al., 2017), and a general sense of thankfulness and joy in response to receiving a gift (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000), which is directed toward others through social exchanges involving beneficiaries and helpers (Blau, 1964).

A consistency across these numerous accounts of gratitude is that gratitude has a positive emotional valence (Lazarus & Lazarus, 1994; Ortony et al., 1988) and is a form of positive affect

(McCullough et al., 2002; Fredrickson, 2004). Gratitude is also conceptualized as a moral affect. That is, gratitude is an emotion that results from and stimulates moral behavior, similar to other moral affects like guilt, shame, sympathy, and empathy (McCullough et al., 2001). It has also been defined in these terms, as a positive, moral emotion that arises when individuals feel they have benefitted from gifts, kindness, support, or favors (Grant & Gino, 2010).

While gratitude may be a positive emotion people experience when they affirm something good has happened to them, this largely stems from the recognition that someone else is responsible for that benefit (Emmons & McCullough, 2004; Watkins & McCurrach, 2017). The benefit, gift, or personal gain may be material or nonmaterial (e.g. spiritual) (Solomon, 1977). Furthermore, it is also possible that other entities may be responsible for that benefit; while another person may be considered the benefactor who intentionally acted to improve the beneficiary's well-being, so might other sources (e.g. God, fate, luck) (Emmons & McCullough, 2003, 2004; for reviews, see Emmons & Shelton, 2002; Lazarus & Lazarus, 1994; McCullough et al., 2001). Building on this, gratitude has also been said to be an emotional reaction that is triggered by the perception that one is the beneficiary of another's good intentions (McCullough et al., 2001; Tesser et al., 1968; Tsang, 2006), or the costly, intentional, voluntary, action of another person (McCullough et al., 2008).

As an other-praising emotion (Algoe & Haidt, 2009), gratitude's key social function is to build and strengthen social relationships (Algoe et al., 2013; Algoe & Haidt, 2009; Algoe et al., 2008) and this function underlies gratitude's critical and strategic role in human social evolution (de Waal & Berger, 2000; McCullough et al., 2008; Trivers, 1971). Specifically, this function is described as the find, remind, and bind theory of gratitude; the experience of gratitude helps one *find* new, or *remind* them of, good relationship partners and then *bind* the two more closely

together (Algoe, 2012). Gratitude has evolved to detect benefactors and both reciprocate and motivate prosocial behavior to their benefactors (McCullough et al., 2008). Other work describes gratitude as emerging to help humans in regards to cooperation, group coordination, and prosociality in social interactions (Algoe, 2008; Stellar et al., 2017). In sum, feeling grateful arises from recognizing that one has obtained a positive outcome, and that there is an external source for this positive outcome (Froh et al., 2008). It is likely that when we feel grateful, we express it. And so, in considering the unique function of gratitude, this dissertation explores the impact of gratitude expressions in interpersonal relationships. Below, I present a brief research overview on the experience of gratitude, and the outcomes of experiencing, receiving, and witnessing gratitude expressions.

Gratitude: An Overview of Research

Both *the experience and expression of* gratitude have been studied across numerous contexts, with findings revealing similar general patterns—gratitude leads to positive outcomes for those who experience, express, receive, and witness it. In particular, given that the central function of gratitude is to promote high-quality social relationships, this emotion is often associated with *affiliation* behaviors, behaviors that promote closeness in relationships with those we interact with (Algoe, 2012). In the sections below, I describe the general research on outcomes of gratitude, with a particular lens on what we know thus far about how the experience and expression of this emotion are related to affiliation-related behaviors.

The Outcomes of *Experiencing* Gratitude. First, the experience of gratitude has been shown to be beneficial at both the trait and state levels. Trait gratitude exists as an individual difference of average frequency in which it is experienced in one's daily life (Wood, Maltby, Stewart, Linley, & Joseph, 2008). Dispositional gratitude is related to a more positive outlook on

life, especially more positive appraisals of one's benefactor (Wood, Maltby, Stewart, & Joseph, 2008). Individuals who have a greater self-reported tendency to experience gratitude report higher levels of subjective well-being, prosocial behaviors, and religiousness and spirituality (McCullough et al., 2004; Seligman et al., 2005). Feeling grateful allows one to deal with stressful situations, appreciate positive experiences, and strengthen social relationships (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). For example, two longitudinal studies demonstrated that state gratitude led to higher levels of perceived social support, but lower levels of stress and depression (Wood, Maltby, Gillett, et al., 2008).

State gratitude occurs as a temporary affect, which has associated thoughts and action tendencies (Wood, Maltby, Stewart, Linley, & Joseph, 2008). At the state level, research has shown that counting one's blessings or listing what you are thankful for increases positive emotions, subjective well-being, life-satisfaction and health over time (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Watkins et al., 2015; Wood, Joseph, & Maltby, 2008). Feeling grateful also increases feelings of autonomy (MacKenzie et al., 2014)—which is linked to the ability to control and overcome situations. Furthermore, momentary states of felt gratitude lead to the reciprocation of aid (McCullough et al., 2001; Tsang, 2006). Previous work finds that individuals who report increased feelings of gratitude, compared to other positive emotions, like amusement, are more likely to pay it forward and lend a helping hand, especially when they cannot directly repay their benefactors (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006). They are also more likely to increase their monetary giving in an economic game (DeSteno et al., 2010), or choose to affiliate with their benefactor (Bartlett et al., 2012), even at the expense of their individual gain and cost to oneself.

The Outcomes of *Expressing Gratitude*. Though, one may experience the feeling of gratitude without expressing it, expressing gratitude also has beneficial effects and we know that

emotional expression is one of the most powerful methods of social influence (Keltner & Haidt, 1999). According to a Gallup pole, over 90% of American teens and adults reported that expressing gratitude made them feel “extremely happy” or “somewhat happy” (Gallup, 1999). Expressing gratitude leads to increased positive mood and the use of constructive conflict management strategies (Baron, 1984). Relatedly, enhancing gratitude by writing a thank-you letter also increased feelings of happiness even a week later (Seligman et al., 2005).

Multiple findings within the gratitude literature have specifically shown that expressing gratitude has an affiliative function, leading the expresser to strengthen relationships that already exist by perceiving higher levels of communal strength in their relationships, viewing their partners as more positive and voicing relationship concerns (Lambert et al., 2010; Lambert & Fincham, 2011). In turn, the gratitude literature has widely shown that expressers are more likely to be helped (Clark et al., 1988; Grant & Gino, 2010; McCullough et al., 2001; Rind & Bordia, 1995).

The Outcomes of *Receiving* Gratitude. Research has also focused on the effect of receiving gratitude, that is, how the benefactor, or recipient, of a gratitude expression may feel and behave. This work, in particular, finds largely positive results. At work, for example, individuals who received gratitude for their prosocial actions reported increased perceived prosocial impact and work engagement compared to those who did not receive gratitude (Lee et al., 2019). Furthermore, recipients of gratitude reported increased feelings of social worth (Cho & Fast, 2012; Grant & Gino, 2010) and feel more socially valued and likeable (Williams & Bartlett, 2015). Similar findings are reflected in romantic relationships as well. Individuals who frequently experienced expressed gratitude from their partners (compared to those who experienced responsiveness to self-disclosure), evaluated their relationships more positively on a

daily basis (Algoe & Zhaoyang, 2016). Hearing expressed gratitude from one's partner increased recipients' relationship satisfaction for over six months (Algoe et al., 2013). Similarly, people who report feeling more appreciated from their partners, in turn, appreciate them more, highlighting the important role that gratitude has in successfully maintaining intimate bonds (Gordon et al., 2012).

Receiving gratitude also increases prosocial behavior toward the expresser (Carey et al., 1976; Clark et al., 1988; McGovern et al., 1975; Rind & Bordia, 1995). For instance, Rind and Bordia (1995) show that customers who receive gratitude from their servers are likely to leave larger tips and Grant and Gino (2010) demonstrate that receivers are more likely to go out of their way to help someone (e.g. spending extra time editing an additional cover letter) who expressed gratitude to them compared to someone who did not. The prosocial effects of receiving gratitude have also been shown to extend to others, even those who did not originally express gratitude (Clark, 1975; Goldman et al., 1982; Moss & Page, 1972). For example, Clark, Northrop & Barkshire (1988) demonstrated that when case managers of social service agencies received thank you letters from their units, they increased their weekly visits to all their clients.

The Outcomes of *Witnessing* Gratitude. While, most research on emotional expressions and gratitude take an *intra-* or *inter-*personal approach to understanding emotions in dyadic situations, new work has started to explore the interpersonal effects of witnessing gratitude, effects that extend beyond the dyadic level. Even though this field is still in its nascent stages, it too finds largely beneficial effects (see Algoe et al., 2019). Building on the multitude of research that demonstrates how gratitude operates in dyadic interactions, a recent paper establishes that third party witnesses, individuals who simply observed a “thank you” from one person to another (compared to positive or neutral control expressions), engage in more helping and affiliative

behavior toward the gratitude expresser (Algoe et al., 2019). Specifically, third-party witnesses are more likely to go out of their way and spontaneously help gratitude expressers, compared to those individuals who express neutral or positive emotions, and they indicate greater affiliation intentions and choose to self-disclose more to them. These findings suggest that not only does gratitude influence the benefactor (i.e. the person receiving the “thank you”), but it also impacts those who simply witness the expression, which then changes how the witness behaves toward the expresser.

Overall, this overview highlights the well-established link between experiencing, expressing, receiving and witnessing gratitude on relationship-building behaviors, such as increased prosociality and helping (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006; Clark et al., 1988; DeSteno et al., 2010; Grant & Gino, 2010; Tsang, 2006), and affiliative intentions and outcomes (Bartlett et al., 2012; Williams & Bartlett, 2015; Algoe et al., 2019). Indeed, while these findings suggest that gratitude undoubtedly encourages initiation and maintenance of close social bonds, little work has empirically examined when and why certain factors may weaken the association between gratitude and affiliation, for both recipients and witnesses of gratitude expressions. I believe that one’s perception of how authentic the gratitude expression is may be a key mechanism.

CHAPTER 3: PERCEIVED EMOTIONAL AUTHENTICITY

In the current work, I focus on the emotion of gratitude, which is often expressed in social behavior, thus ripe for investigation of further understanding how it is perceived in interpersonal relationships. When we interact with others, we spontaneously make judgments about them, based on a variety of sources (Kenny, 2004). As such, emotion expression is a source of information for interaction partners (Côté, 2005; Ekman, 2003; Keltner & Haidt, 1999) and individuals are highly attuned to the emotions expressed around them (Elfenbein, 2007; Van Kleef, 2009); we then use these emotional displays to make inferences and form perceptions (Hareli & Hess, 2010), including perceptions of emotional authenticity (Grandey et al., 2005).

As I primarily focus on the perceptions of authenticity of the emotion of gratitude, I draw from the Emotions as Social Information (EASI) model, which describes how emotions affect not only the emoter's own outcomes, but also the outcomes of individuals in their social environment, namely receivers and witnesses (see also Algoe et al., 2019). This theoretical perspective (Van Kleef, 2009) highlights that emotions provide information about an individual's inner feelings (Ekman, 1999), motives (Van Kleef, 2010), goal orientations (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005), social readiness (Shiota et al., 2004), and intentions (e.g., Keltner & Kring, 1998) and thus, help to disambiguate social situations. While much work has explored and applied this theory, little work has sought to understand how observers versus receivers interpret gratitude expressions specifically.

Critically, however, the EASI model further specifies that observers' inferences are dependent on social-relational factors, such as "the way the emotion is expressed" (Van Kleef,

2009, p. 187). Indeed, the authenticity of the emotional display may be seen as such, a factor that influences the perception of emotional expressions and their effects on others (Van Kleef et al., 2010). This criterion is supported by research in the person perception literature that suggests that the instant and immediate perception we make in many social interactions, is that of authenticity. In other words, humans are most frequently assessing how authentic another person is (Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2000), and we use our conclusions to then shape our future perceptions and behaviors toward that person (Erickson, 1994). In the authenticity literature, research shows that people who act authentically are more respected, liked, trusted and elicit more desirable follower responses compared to those who are inauthentic (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Liu & Perrewe, 2006; see Cha et al., 2019 for a review).

Integrating these perspectives together, I focus on *perceived emotional authenticity*. In the current work, I draw from the literature examining antecedents and outcomes of externally perceived authenticity to provide further support for the importance of perceived emotional authenticity. Below, I begin by describing this construct, and then provide an overview of some consequences of perceived emotional authenticity and inauthenticity. Lastly, I detail the existing work that has foreshadowed the potential impact of inauthentic gratitude, and offer evidence as to why this may influence affiliation behaviors toward the expresser.

Perceived Emotional Authenticity: Definition and Importance

Emotional authenticity is considered to be associated with genuineness, sincerity and spontaneity¹ (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Grandey & Brauburger, 2002; Hochschild, 1983; Salmela, 2005; Wentworth & Ryan, 1992), or in other words, a sincere and true expression of

¹ The construct of spontaneity has been discussed as an element, but not necessary condition, of emotional authenticity; hence, it is not included as a requirement of perceived emotional authenticity (Salmela, 2005, p. 210).

our affective state (Salmela, 2005). However, people often enact emotions in an insincere manner to induce cooperation (Côté et al., 2013; Kopelman et al., 2006), achieve personal goals (Tamir, Mitchell, & Gross, 2008), and persuade and influence others (Forgas, 2001). For this reason, individuals are constantly evaluating emotions on different psychological and normative standards, and one of those standards is sincerity (Salmela & Mayer, 2009). While emotional sincerity is purely an intra-psychic phenomenon (Harter, 2002), observers lack the knowledge of expresser's internal states, and thus must make their own evaluations about the authenticity of the expression. Therefore, *perceived emotional authenticity* is the perception of how authentic, genuine, and sincere an emotion is, but it does not capture the extent to which one is accurate in their perceptions.

Benefits of Perceived Authenticity

Advancing the EASI model, Van Kleef, Homan, & Cheshin (2012) provide further theoretical evidence for the fact that emotional expressions have interpersonal effects but that these effects may depend on other stimuli, such as how appropriate, or authentic, the emotion expression is perceived to be. While emotional expressions have the potential to signal expresser's attitudes, behavioral intentions, etc. (Van Kleef, 2016), some research has shown that a key mechanism in this relationship is perceived authenticity. Individuals expect and appreciate authentic behavior (Grandey et al., 2005), and the concept of authenticity has been increasingly explored in management research. Most scholars have documented the positive benefits of authenticity, both from internally felt and perceived authenticity, as well as from externally perceived authenticity displayed by someone else (Cha et al., 2019; Hewlin et al., in press). In general, reactions to inauthentic emotional displays are less positive than reactions to authentic displays (Ekman, 1992; Ekman & Friesen, 1982). For example, early evidence shows that

authentic emotional displays create positive impressions of the expresser (e.g. greater trustworthiness, confidence, calmness), whereas inauthentic displays signal negative impressions (e.g. agitation, untrustworthiness) (Frank et al., 1993; see also Grandey, 2003). Other research highlights that inauthentic emotional displays are perceived as dishonest, unethical, and manipulative (Johnston et al., 2010; Krumhuber et al., 2007; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989).

Supporting this is the notion that because emotions are a driver of moral judgments (Joseph, 2009), and the assessment of authenticity is also a key moral component (e.g. Hannah et al., 2005), when we perceive emotions, we immediately gauge authenticity to assess others' character and use this evaluation to then decide whether to continue engaging with the expresser. If we perceive someone as inauthentic, this may signal that they are untrustworthy and immoral. This is particularly likely in organizations because we are in constant communication with individuals, such as our supervisors, subordinates, team members and customers, and we rely on their emotions as a source of feedback to guide our subsequent thoughts, intentions, and behaviors. We then afford greater influence, and react more positively, to those we believe to be genuine (Hannah et al., 2005). Undoubtedly, the authentic, or inauthentic, perceptions we make of individuals and their emotional expressions, shape our social behavior.

Building on this, research has demonstrated the many detrimental and pervasive consequences of displaying inauthentic emotions (Gardner et al., 2009; Grandey et al., 2015; Hochschild, 1983; Roberts et al., 2009), specifically in the domains of customer service (Hochschild, 1983; Mattila & Enz, 2002; Wang et al., 2017), negotiations (Kopelman et al., 2006), hiring interactions (Rivera, 2015), and leader-follower relationships (Gooty et al., 2010; Humphrey et al., 2016). In negotiations, for instance, emotion expressions have more influence when they are perceived to be more genuine, or authentic, than strategic. For example, faking an

emotion in a negotiation led to increased demands by one's counterpart due to reduced trust, but expressing true emotions led to less demands due to an increase in trust (Coté et al., 2013). Similarly, counterparts who perceived the negotiator's anger as authentic (versus inauthentic) made more concessions, or gave in more, to their partner's demands (Tng & Au, 2014). In customer service interactions, the authenticity of employee's emotional displays led to greater positive affect among the customers (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006) and customer satisfaction (Cheshin et al., 2018). Another study revealed that service employees who were perceived as expressing authentic positive emotions were rated by customers as having a stronger customer orientation and customers indicated higher loyalty intentions (Groth et al., 2009). Furthermore, perceived authenticity also influences job hiring. In an experimental study, candidates with authentic versus inauthentic smiles were rated as more attractive, likeable, trustworthy, and likely to cooperate (Krumhuber et al., 2007). These authentic job candidates were also rated as most suitable for the job and most likely to be selected (Krumhuber et al., 2009).

For leaders in particular, their emotional sincerity has been established as a critical component of follower's perceptions and behaviors (Gooty et al., 2010; Van Kleef et al., 2012). When followers perceive an incongruence between leader's feedback and displayed emotion, they react more negatively (Newcombe & Ashkanasy, 2002). In contrast, followers who perceived more frequent display of sincere emotions from their leaders reported higher satisfaction (Fisk & Friesen, 2012). Indeed, for leaders, their perceived authenticity is theorized to produce desirable follower responses, such as leader satisfaction, in-role and extra-role work performance, loyalty to the leader, intent to stay, and organizational commitment (Gardner et al., 2009; Gill & Caza, 2018). Perceived leader authenticity has also been shown to lead to greater trust in the leader and positive emotions toward the leader (Weischer et al., 2013).

Overall, findings from both the emotions and authenticity literatures suggest that perceived emotional authenticity is likely to lead to more positive outcomes for the expresser, while perceived inauthenticity is not (e.g. Gardner et al., 2009). In the literature, perceived authenticity (of both emotional displays and the person) has been linked to positive outcomes such as trust and cooperation. While little work has empirically tested the direct relationship between perceived emotional authenticity and affiliation, the connection to these related constructs provides insight into how perceived emotional authenticity may be directly related to affiliative intentions.

Gratitude, Perceived Emotional Authenticity and Affiliation

Evaluations of authenticity are crucial in shaping one's behavior toward another. As noted above, individuals may experience negative consequences if perceived inauthentically, yet reap the benefits of a positive social interaction if perceived as authentic. In the current work, I propose that one positive benefit of perceived emotional authenticity is affiliation. When one is perceived as authentic, the greater the chances others would want to affiliate with that person.

While the connection between expressed gratitude and affiliation has been demonstrated, little work has directly explored this phenomenon of perceived inauthentic gratitude and how it may alter downstream consequences, such as affiliation behaviors. However, an early study may shed some light on how gratitude expressions that “seem fake” have negative effects. In this study, interviewers called customers from a jewelry store and either thanked them for their business or thanked them for their business and told them about a sale² (Carey et al., 1976). Findings show that because the simple “thank you” call was seen as the sincerest, customers who received that call were more likely to increase their purchases at the jewelry store. In fact, during

² A third group of customers was used as a control condition, and thus, not called at all.

the test month, 70% of the store's increased profit was due to the customers who received the "thank you" call, compared to 30% who received the insincere call. Additionally, Raggio and Folse's (2009) study of the effectiveness of "thank you" advertisements on evaluations of Louisiana following Hurricane Katrina also showed that perceived insincerity impacted attitudes toward Louisiana. In a different context, Algoe & Zhaoyang (2016) show that when partners were viewed as less understanding, validating, and caring in their expressions of gratitude, the benefactors reported feeling more negative emotions one month later. This works suggests that perceptions of inauthenticity of gratitude may activate negative responses. Specifically, these studies emphasize the possibility that a negative response (e.g. less purchasing at a store, more negative attitudes and felt emotions toward the gratitude expresser) occurs due to an underlying question of how sincere the thank you seemed. This insincerity may drive others to want to affiliate with those entities less.

From the authenticity literature, there have been many established downstream consequences of being perceived as an inauthentic person, all of which may be considered close proxies of affiliation. For example, perceived authenticity is a key determinant of trust (Coté et al., 2013; Johnston et al., 2010) and trust is often associated with affiliative intentions, like cooperation and social exchange (Cook & Cooper, 2003). Building on this, it has been shown that observers of inauthentic emotional displays demonstrate less cooperative and helping behavior toward the expresser (Johnston et al., 2010; Krumhuber et al., 2007) and report liking them less (Liu & Perrewé, 2006). Other research shows that when a negotiator is perceived as expressing inauthentic emotions, their counterpart shows little interest in negotiating again with them in the future (Coté et al., 2013). In sum, these key outcomes of helping, cooperation, trust,

liking, and engagement indicates that perceived authenticity positively influences affiliative intentions.

In review, work from the authenticity and emotions literature pinpoints important outcomes of being perceived as inauthentic. The majority of the work has focused on the perceived inauthenticity of one's character, personality, etc. However, this dissertation aims to extend the exploration of authenticity in the realm of emotions and further explore what factors may influence perceptions of emotional authenticity, and consequentially, how these perceptions might influence social behavior toward the expresser. The next chapter examines two potential antecedents of perceived emotional authenticity (in the remaining pages, also referred to as simply, 'perceived authenticity') of gratitude, situating it in the context of organizations.

CHAPTER 4: GRATITUDE IN ORGANIZATIONS: THE IMPORTANCE OF POWER, PERSPECTIVE AND ASSESSMENTS OF AUTHENTICITY

While the gratitude literature has shown a clear link between gratitude and affiliation, extending this work to an organizational setting presents many open questions. As such, while the Emotions as Social Information (EASI) model suggests that people use others' emotions to make sense of a situation, it also highlights that these inferences about others' emotions depends on the context (Van Kleef, 2009; Van Kleef et al., 2010). The EASI model draws attention to two particular contextual features, or boundary conditions, that alter the way emotions are perceived: (1) the relative power between the expresser and receiver (Hareli & Rafaeli, 2008; Hess et al., 2000; Van Kleef, 2009; Van Kleef et al., 2004) and (2) whether the emotion is received directly (to a specific target) or indirectly and inadvertently (to a third-party witness) (Algoe et al., 2019; Felps, et al., 2006; Hareli & Rafaeli, 2008).

Organizations, in fact, are defined by these characteristics: first, a social hierarchy (Magee & Galinsky, 2008) wherein relationships and interactions are characterized by power differentials and second, multiple sets of interactions and perspectives (expressers, receivers and witnesses of emotions) (Ashkanasy, 2003; Hareli & Rafaeli, 2008). Therefore, organizations are a context in which the benefits and outcomes of expressing and receiving gratitude may not be as straightforward and uniform as those observed in prior research. I explore how these two particular contextual features of organizations, power (whether the gratitude is expressed by a high or low-power individual) and perspective (how receivers versus witnesses perceive gratitude) influence the inferences and outcomes surrounding gratitude expressions. As described previously, emotional authenticity is a common assessment, an immediate indication of another

person's character and a clear driver of future behavior toward the expresser. Hence, I focus particularly on how these two factors—power and perspective—influence perceptions of the authenticity of gratitude, which is a judgment that then influences affiliation behaviors. For an overview, see the full theoretical model in Figure 1.

Gratitude Expressions in a Social Hierarchy

Power and status are the bases of social hierarchy, which is defined as “an implicit or explicit rank order of individuals or groups with respect to a valued social dimension” (Magee & Galinsky, 2008, p. 5). In my work, I use the phrase *relative power* to describe a social-relational rank difference in which at least one individual is superior to another individual (Blau & Scott, 1962) and can therefore influence the subordinate other, either through the control over valued resources or punishment (Emerson, 1962; Keltner et al., 2003; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Most work in the gratitude literature has focused on lateral expressions of gratitude, from peer to peer, or between individuals who maintain an equal level of rank (e.g. romantic partners, strangers, etc.), and a hierarchical context has not been thoroughly considered. Given the focus of this dissertation on the hierarchical perspective, it is critical to realize that gratitude may be expressed in two additional directions—downward or upward—depending on the rank-ordered relationship between the expresser and recipient. Downward expressions of gratitude occur when a higher-ranked individual expresses gratitude to a lower-ranked individual (e.g. high-power to low-power). Upward expressions of gratitude consist of a lower-ranked individual expressing gratitude to a higher-ranked individual (e.g. low-power to high-power).

Research in the social hierarchy literature demonstrates that experiences of power shape people's perceptions of and behaviors toward others, as well as the lens through which others perceive and behave towards them. Critically, tendencies associated with different levels of

power are activated when power differentials are made salient (Magee & Galinsky, 2008), such as in unequal rank relationships. For example, high-power individuals feel more freedom to demonstrate a wide range of interpersonal behaviors (Guinote et al., 2002), take more risks (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006), and openly express their opinions in a group discussions (Berdahl & Martorana, 2006), which indicates they may be more likely to behave authentically. In addition, power holders are also more likely to focus on their own individual outcomes and goal pursuit (Gruenfeld et al., 2008; Guinote, 2007), are more self-focused on their own (versus others') feelings (Galinsky et al., 2006) and are less influenced by their low-power counterparts' emotions (Van Kleef et al., 2006). These findings together with research by Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee (2003) indicates that those with power tend to feel less constrained by their social environment and are more likely to act authentically on their desires, suggesting that they may also be more likely to express emotions only when they feel them.

In turn, gratitude expressions from high-power holders may be perceived as more authentic. Given previous findings that high-power individuals feel more freedom to express their feelings, (Guinote et al., 2002; Hecht & LaFrance, 1998), they are more likely to act genuinely. Their emotional expressions, accordingly, should be perceived as such (e.g. Ekman et al., 1969). Furthermore, because higher ranked individuals tend to be more self-focused (Galinsky et al., 2006) and have a lesser desire to reciprocate a kind gesture for their subordinates, compared to those in equal ranked relationships (Inesi et al., 2012), their expressions of gratitude may be viewed as a discretionary gesture, and thus, an extra-role behavior (Grandey & Brauburger, 2002) by their low-power subordinates. This gratitude may then be seen as more authentic because it is not normative, or expected, and thus, that the high-power individual is truly thankful.

In contrast, as lower power individuals' behaviors are constrained (Keltner et al., 2003), their expressions of gratitude may be viewed as less authentic overall. First, from an impression management perspective, as low-power employees are more dependent on their high-power counterparts for resources and advancement, they are likely to focus on creating a positive impression. They may engage in emotion regulation, particularly the up-regulation of positive emotions (Côté et al., 2013), to enable them to create overall favorable impressions (Harker & Keltner, 2001). Because of their status-seeking goals and the fundamental human desire to gain power and status via hierarchical advancement (Anderson et al., 2015), it is probable that low-power individuals will engage in impression management strategies, like expressing gratitude. Indeed, in an organizational setting, Cho and Fast (2012) find that expressing gratitude is a way in which subordinates can influence their insecure power holders. When power holders received threatening feedback from their subordinates, they were more likely to denigrate these low-power individuals. When the low-power counterparts expressed gratitude to them, the low-power individuals were less likely to be harmed. Also, Ksenofontov & Becker (2019) show that expressing gratitude in an intergroup context characterized by power differences and social injustice is harmful for those in positions of low-power because it signals their submissive role, which may indicate they are expressing gratitude because they feel they need to, as opposed to wanting to. Together, these findings allude to the possibility that gratitude expressed from a low to high-power individual may be viewed as strategic, and less authentic.

Second, low-power holders' behaviors may also be constrained by gratitude norms. Recent research has introduced another function of gratitude, namely, a system-justifying function that results from gratitude norms (Eibach, Wilmut, & Libby, 2015), which are messages and practices that define situations in which it is appropriate to feel grateful (Komter, 2005) and

express those feelings of gratitude (Saarni, 1979). The system justification theory discusses attitudes and beliefs that play a critical role in the reinforcement of hierarchy (Marx & Engels, 1970), beliefs that tend to legitimize the status quo by endorsing and rationalizing hierarchical positions as a method of social organization (Jost et al., 2004). This theory contends that people accept the inequality in hierarchies and that low ranking individuals even make decisions to serve the interests of the high ranking individuals (Jost et al., 2004).

In line with this system justifying function, upward gratitude expressions may be considered an expected behavior. Low-power expressers who feel dependent on their high-power counterparts may feel expected to express gratitude, especially because their low-power position may create situational demands to express gratitude and failing to do so is socially undesirable (Emmons, 2016). Thus, in an upward expression, when a low-power individual is expressing gratitude to a high-power person, it may be reflected as an expected, or system-justifying behavior in the hierarchy; behaviors that are expected or required as ongoing job performance are considered to be an in-role behavior (Katz, 1964; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Research examining stereotypes of emotions associated with status also supports this notion, showing that low status people are expected to feel more appreciation compared to their high status counterparts (Tiedens et al., 2000). So, it is plausible that an upward expression of gratitude is a normative, expected behavior in order to maintain the ranks of the hierarchy, and consequentially, it may be perceived as less authentic.

Witnessing Downward and Upward Expressions of Gratitude

Most research on emotions and emotion expression take an *intra-* or *inter-*personal approach to understanding their effects in different contexts. That is, researchers have largely looked at the influence of emotions on the expresser's cognitions and behavior (Weiss &

Cropanzano, 1996), or on the receiver's cognitions and behaviors (Rafali & Sutton, 1989; Van Kleef et al., 2010). However, emotions are social in nature (Keltner & Haidt, 1999; Parkinson et al., 2005) and thus, in organizations that are comprised of multiple types of interdependent social structures (dyads, triads, teams, to name just a few), we are often influenced by the emotions of those surrounding us (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; see Elfenbein, 2007 for a review of emotions in organizations), even if their behaviors are not directed at us. For example, an expression of gratitude may be directed from a grateful expresser (first-party *expresser*) to a benefactor (second-party *recipient*), all the while, an observer (third-party *witness*), is exposed to this behavior. The third-party witnessing effect is similar to the "footings" process described by Goffman (1981, p. 124), in which elements of speech reach both a "ratified" audience (those being addressed or with license to overhear) and non-ratified listeners (eavesdroppers). Importantly, while the emotional expression is directed toward the recipient and not toward the witness, the witness operates in the same broader social context.

This "witness perspective", generally understudied in the management and psychology literatures at large, is especially important in organizations because third-party witnesses are regularly involved in the perceptions of emotional expressions at work (Hareli & Rafaeli, 2008). Although some research has explored the consequences of observing uncivil behaviors, such as anger (Geddes & Callister, 2007; Glomb & Hulin, 1997; Miron-Spektor et al., 2011), rudeness (Porath & Erez, 2007, 2009), and unfair and disrespectful customers (Rupp & Spencer, 2006), little research has empirically examined the consequences of witnessing positive emotions, such as gratitude. Some nascent work on the group-level function of gratitude suggests that expressions of gratitude impact third-party witnesses of that behavior. In this work, third-party witnesses, similar to recipients of gratitude expressions, were more likely to want to help and

affiliate with gratitude expressers, compared to other positive emotion or neutral expressers (Algoe et al., 2019). However, this work did not take into account a separate stream of early research (Goffman, 1955; Gordon, 1996; Pandey & Bohra, 1986) that highlights that because witnesses are not involved in the interactions themselves, they are free from conversational demands (Burgoon et al., 1996) and are not aware of the direct causes of behavior, and may additionally, become more suspicious of the expresser's motive; this heightened suspicion of the expresser's potential alternative motives triggers different attributional processes compared to those that may exist for recipients of that behavior (Fein, 1996) because the witness is not apart of the social exchange that occurs.

Witnesses and recipients may form different perceptions of gratitude expressers particularly due to the different attributional processes they might engage in. According to attribution theory, people tend to ask “why” an event occurs; this may apply to emotion expression as well. In doing so, individuals distinguish between an internal reason that is attributed to the self, or an external reason that is attributed to a situation, outside the self (Kelley, 1973). When making internal attributions, the perceiver attributes the cause of the behavior to the dispositional characteristics of the person. In the case of receiving emotional expression of gratitude, the receiver is likely to believe that the expresser is truly grateful and is thus recognizing the receiver's own benevolent actions. In turn, these internal attributions are a form of affirmation that in highlighting to the recipient that the expresser is a good person who calls out these types of behaviors and thus affirms that the recipient themselves are deserving of their gratitude and praise. Therefore, recipients of gratitude expressions may be more likely than witnesses to make an internal attribution for the person's expression of gratitude.

On the contrary, witnesses may view gratitude expressions as being caused by the situation and thus make an external attribution for the expresser's behavior (Kelley, 1973). In this, when witnesses observe individuals' behaviors, they are more likely to believe that their actions are being caused by the way the situation or context is set up. Because witnesses may make external attributions for the expresser's behavior, they are focused on the intent of the behavior given the situation, focusing on what they believe are the motives of the expressers. Indeed, work on ingratiation shows that because an observer's ego or face is not directly involved in the interaction, under these circumstances it becomes easier to question the validity of the ingratiation's behavior (Goffman, 1955; Vonk, 2002).

The evidence supporting this separate and differentiating witness perspective highlights first that witnesses are more sensitive to a lack of authenticity: they are able to discriminate between authentic and inauthentic facial expressions (Ekman et al., 1988) and are quite aware of when another is engaging in self-presentation behavior, such as ingratiation or self-promotion (Fein et al., 1990; Godfrey, Jones, & Lord, 1986). Witnesses also develop more negative impressions of the ingratiation, compared to the positive impressions the recipients form (Braver et al., 1977; Cialdini et al., 1974; Gordon, 1996; Pandey & Bohra, 1986). In turn, this suggests that witnesses will be more skeptical when evaluating the expresser's authenticity. These potential outcomes make sense, following suit of the different attributional processes that witnesses and recipients engage in, because

The Interaction Between Power and Perspective When Perceiving Gratitude Expressions

The rank relationships that make up social hierarchy not only influence how and why people express emotions (Magee & Galinsky, 2008), but also how witnesses of those expressions may perceive and interpret them. Observers use emotional expressions at the interpersonal level

to help disambiguate social interactions (Van Kleef, 2010), and the relative power between an expresser and recipient may create ambiguity around the expresser's motives. I argue that much of the witnesses' perceptions and reactions toward gratitude expressions within the hierarchy stem from their likelihood to make external, or situational, attributions about the expresser's behavior (Weiner et al., 1971). Because the motive of the low-power expresser to gain hierarchical advancement is much more salient in the context of these power dynamics than a potential motive of the high-power expresser, I argue that this situation triggers witnesses of upward gratitude expressions to perceive them as the least authentic overall. Below, I detail reasons as to why this may be the case, first by honing in on the numerous reasons that upward expressions, particularly when observed by a third-party witness, may be perceived as inauthentic, and then outline reasons for why witnesses of downward expressions and recipients of both upward and downward expressions may perceive greater authentic gratitude, in comparison.

When hierarchical relationships are made salient, witnesses may be more focused on making external attributions for another person's behavior, and thus, more attuned to the motives that are associated with the power dynamics. When witnessing upward gratitude, witnesses are cued in to the potential status-seeking motives of the low-power expresser, as compared to recipients of an upward gratitude expression, because they may be more likely to make situational attributions about the behavior. I argue that this is the case for three strategic reasons: the potential for the low-power expresser's behaviors to be seen as ingratiating, other-enhancing, and brown-nosing. First, the impression management literature suggests that low-power individuals choose to engage in ingratiating behaviors, an impression management strategy, to get ahead and make themselves seem more attractive to others (Jones, 1964; Wortman &

Linsensmeyer, 1977). Accordingly, it is more common for a low-power individual, compared to a high-power individual, to engage in ingratiation tactics in order to gain the approval of supervisors (Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984). Second, expressing upward gratitude may be seen as an other-enhancing ingratiation tactic used to increase liking (Jones, 1964). This is because gratitude is an other-praising emotion (Algoe & Haidt, 2009), and in a hierarchical structure, an ‘other-praising’ behavior may be misconstrued for a strategic move to gain status, since people in low-power positions have a desire to do so (see Anderson et al., 2015 for a review). As described by Goffman (1969), gratitude may be seen as a “control move”, an intentional effort to produce expressions that one believes will improve a situation if viewed by the observer. Specifically, lower-ranked individuals, given their desire for hierarchical advancement, may use gratitude expressions, as a strategic, ingratiation tactic. Third, low-power individuals may engage in “brown-nosing”, a strategy employed to gain favors in the context of power relations (Martin & Wilson, 2012). Research by Vonk (1998) showed that brown-nosing, or likeable behaviors directed from subordinates to superiors, but dislikeable behaviors directed downward to subordinates, triggered the prospect of ulterior motives by observers and appeared “slimy”. Because the motives behind acts of ingratiation are viewed as sincere (Vonk, 2002), there is a strong likelihood that witnesses will perceive upward gratitude as insincere.

Given what we know about the status-seeking hypothesis (Anderson et al., 2015), a witness of a downward expression of gratitude may not attribute that person’s motive as an attempt to gain status because the expresser is already in a higher ranked position. A witness of a downward expression of gratitude may see the higher-ranked expresser as exhibiting genuine responsiveness to the lower-ranked person’s behavior, because there is no suspicion of a strategic motive for them to do so; because we expect high-power individuals to express their emotions

more freely (Hecht & LaFrance, 1998), witnesses may assume high-power individuals are expressing gratitude to their recipients as a way to communicate a sincere thank you. Thus, in comparison to witnesses of upward gratitude, witnesses of downward expressions may perceive them as more authentic.

There are reasons to believe that receiving gratitude, despite the power differential of the expresser, may lead to generally authentic perceptions. One major reason is because receiving gratitude makes us feel socially valued and worthy (Grant & Gino, 2010) and thus, we are less likely to engage in negative assessments of the individual responsible for these overall experiences of positivity and worth. Indeed, recent work examining the influence of gratitude expressions between individuals with differences in power has empirically shown that feelings of social worth after receiving gratitude are true for both low-power holders (Mattila et al., 2016) and those in high-power positions (Belkin & Kong, 2018; Cho & Fast, 2012). These findings imply that regardless of one's power position, receiving gratitude feels good—it makes one feel valued, appreciated, and worthy. Therefore, I believe that recipients of both upward and downward gratitude expressions will each perceive them as more authentic than witnesses of upward gratitude expressions.

However, some evidence also supports the possibility that recipients of downward gratitude will perceive the expressions as more authentic than recipients of upward expressions. Drawing from the system-justification theory, work has shown that when someone perceives themselves as dependent on their system, they are motivated to evaluate that system more favorably (Kay & Zanna, 2009; Shepherd & Kay, 2012). The same may be true for low-power individuals who are dependent on their high-power expressers, but not vice versa; so, when low-

power individuals receive gratitude, they may view that expression as more authentic than high-power individuals receiving gratitude.

In comparison to witnesses of upward expressions though, a high-power person receiving gratitude may be likely to perceive that display as authentic because of their self-serving interpretations. Although ingratiation may be frowned upon by observers, recipients are still susceptible to ingratiation tactics, for example, flattery (Vonk, 2002). These findings underscore the possibility that high-power recipients pay less attention to the expresser's motives because not only are they directly involved in the interaction, but they are more self-focused (Lammers & Burgmer, 2019) and easily swayed by the positive recognition. Thus, recipients of upward gratitude may be likely to perceive those expressions as more authentic than witnesses of that behavior.

In combination, these findings suggest that low-power individuals are likely to express gratitude and when witnesses observe these positive expressions, they deem these emotional displays to be “slimy” and inauthentic. Hence, witnesses of upward gratitude will perceive them as the least authentic compared to recipients of upward gratitude and recipients of both upward and downward gratitude. Specifically, I predict the following:

Hypothesis 1. When gratitude is expressed, there will be an effect of perspective (witnessing vs. receiving) on perceived authenticity that is dependent on the expresser's relative power (high vs. low), such that perceived authenticity is lowest when witnessing an upward gratitude expression.

When situations present an opportunity for an alternative motive to be the driver of behavior, such as when a subordinate expresses gratitude to his or her boss, perceivers are quick to question how sincere, or authentic an emotion expression is. So, building on hypothesis 1, I argue that perceptions of inauthenticity are heightened for the witness, particularly in the case of

upward gratitude expressions, because witnesses make instrumental attributions for the low-power expresser's behavior. For example, one study shows that when a status hierarchy is present, if there is any suspicion to how one gained status, this triggers questions of authenticity, whereby those who may have incentives to pursue status are attributed to being less authentic (Hahl & Zuckerman, 2014).

So, why might this be the case? Research shows that suspicions of ulterior motives trigger attributional processes (Fein, 1996). Attribution theory helps us understand the “*why*” motivating others' behaviors (Kelley, 1973; Weiner, 1985). When one infers that behaviors are motivated by instrumental, or selfish, rather than generous and selfless concerns, they make cynical attributions for their behavior (Inesi et al., 2012)—referred to throughout the rest of this dissertation as, *instrumental attributions*. The salience of an alternative motive emerges from the potential that upward gratitude expressions may be ingratiating (Jones, 1964) or brown-nosing (Martin & Wilson, 2012), an impression management strategy as discussed above (Vonk, 1998). In the current work, observers may believe that a low-power expresser did in fact have an ulterior motive to gain access to resources, or get ahead, thus being driven by an instrumental reason to express gratitude. This is a result of the argument stated above, suggesting that witnesses are more likely than recipients to make external, or situational, attributions for the expresser's behavior. Thus, it is likely that observers make instrumental attributions for upward gratitude expressers.

However, because recipients of upward gratitude are more likely to make internal attributions for the expresser's behavior, they will not be as cued in to the potential for instrumentality. Early work on the psychology of power (Kipnis et al., 1976) discusses how power-holders' awareness of the asymmetrical dependence in their relationships changes social

perceptions and interpretations of other's behaviors. Specifically, power-holders tend to form self-referential attributions for their counterparts' ambiguous behaviors (Kramer, 1994; Lammers & Burgmer, 2019) and thus, they create instrumental attributions for generous acts by their subordinates (Inesi et al., 2012). In other words, high-power individuals believe that their counterpart's unsolicited behaviors are driven by a desire to gain access to the power holder's resources. Though, in the case of gratitude expressions, based on the empirical literature on third-party witnessing and power, I believe that high-power receivers are less likely than witnesses to create instrumental attributions for the low-power person's behavior because the high-power individual is aware of the act and meaning that initially caused the gratitude expression, thus making the emotional expression less ambiguous. Additionally, because high-power individuals are more self-focused (Galinsky et al., 2006), they may inherently assume that the expression of gratitude was driven by their own actions, and less by the low-power expresser's aspiration.

Again, for downward gratitude expressers, theories related to power and status (Anderson et al., 2015; Keltner et al., 2003) support the notion that these expressions come from the high-power expresser's spontaneous desire, and discretionary choice to enact this behavior. Therefore, neither recipients nor witnesses will believe that individuals in a relatively high-power position are expressing gratitude to benefit themselves, or get ahead. Parallel to the argument made for recipients of upward gratitude expressions, because recipients of downward gratitude are also involved in the interaction are more likely to be aware of the action that caused the gratitude expression, they may be less likely to make other attributions for their high-power counterpart's behavior. Considering the reasons why upward gratitude expressers are more likely to be seen as having an alternative motive for their behavior, and why witnesses are more attentive to these

motives, I predict that witnesses are the most likely to make instrumental attributions for the upward gratitude expresser's behavior, which will lead to perceptions of inauthentic gratitude.

Specifically, I hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 2. When gratitude is expressed, the indirect effect of perspective (witnessing vs. receiving) on perceived authenticity through instrumental attributions is conditional on the relative power of the expresser (high vs. low), such that the indirect effect is significant when witnessing upward gratitude expressions.

As described in Chapter 3, being perceived as inauthentic has a myriad of negative consequences for the expresser. Given that instrumental attributions may also cause the perception of inauthenticity, how then might these variables impact social outcomes for the expresser? I argue that instrumental attributions and perceived inauthenticity are likely to lead to a downstream consequence for affiliation, particularly by witnesses of upward gratitude expressions. In exploring the relationship between instrumental attributions and affiliation, one study shows that instrumental attributions made for a partner's behavior are negatively associated with the development of a close relationship (Larzelere & Huston, 1980), and affiliation behaviors are key to developing and maintaining close relationships (Algoe, 2012). Being that perceptions of emotional authenticity often shape our behaviors toward others, and that greater perceived authenticity often leads to more favorable impressions and behaviors toward the expresser (e.g. trust, liking, helping, cooperation; Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Côté et al., 2013; Johnston et al., 2010; Krumhuber et al., 2007; Liu & Perrewe, 2006), I predict that witnesses and recipients will want to affiliate with gratitude expressers who they perceive to be more authentic. Given the possibility that witnesses will perceive upward gratitude expressions as the least authentic, I predict that these perceptions will directly translate to the witness'

behavior; they will demonstrate a lack of affiliation intentions toward the low-power expresser.

Specifically, I hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 3. When gratitude is expressed, the indirect effect of perspective (witnessing vs. receiving) on affiliation through perceived authenticity is conditional on the relative power of the expresser (high vs. low), such that the indirect effect is significant when witnessing upward gratitude expressions.

Hypothesis 4. When gratitude is expressed, the indirect effect of perspective (witnessing vs. receiving) on affiliation will be serially mediated, first through instrumental attributions and second through perceived authenticity, and conditional on the relative power of the expresser (high vs. low), such that the indirect effect is significant when witnessing upward gratitude expressions.

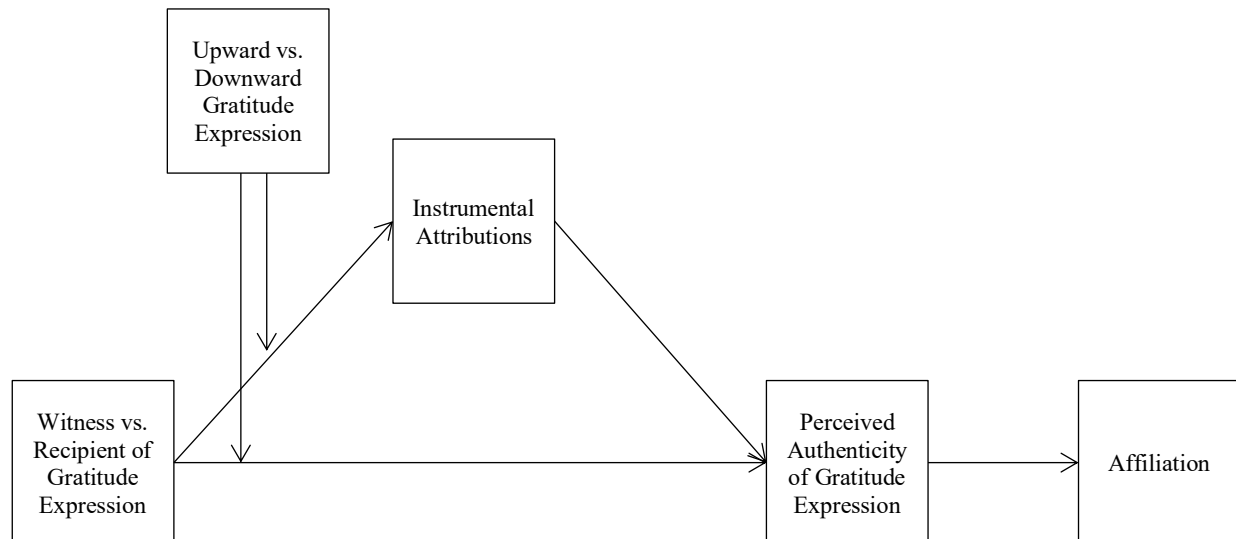


Figure 1. *Theoretical model.*

CHAPTER 5: OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

While it has been shown in previous literature that expressing gratitude motivates affiliative behavior toward the expresser, I explore whether this association still holds when the gratitude is expressed within a social hierarchy and if the role of the perceiver matters. Across four experimental studies (preliminary study, 2 online, 1 laboratory; total N = 1,518), I first establish that the relative power between the expresser and receiver impact witness' perceptions of authenticity and their desire to affiliate with the expressers, and then test my specific predictions that the context of social hierarchy and a witness versus receiver perspective together impact how authentic gratitude is perceived to be and thus, influence affiliation intentions toward the expresser. Furthermore, I hypothesize that witnesses of upward gratitude expressions are the drivers of these interactive effects on affiliation through the mechanisms of instrumental attributions and perceived emotional authenticity.

Since little empirical work has recognized any differences in perceived authenticity of gratitude expressions, and my theorizing is built on the assumption that these differences do in fact exist, I begin by exploring how upward and downward gratitude expressions are authentically perceived (preliminary study). I then build on these findings to look at the interactive effects of relative power and perspective on perceptions of authenticity, demonstrating that witnesses of upward gratitude perceive them as the least authentic (hypothesis 1 tested in Studies 1-3), and that they also choose to affiliate with upward gratitude expressers less than recipients of those same expressions, or witnesses and recipients of downward gratitude expressions (hypothesis 3 tested in Studies 1-3). Lastly, I show that witnesses are much more

attuned to the motives of the expresser than recipients are and that they alter their authentic perceptions accordingly, perceiving upward gratitude expressers as the most instrumental and least authentic (hypothesis 2 tested in Studies 2-3). This indirect effect through instrumental attributions and then perceived emotional authenticity also significantly impacts affiliation intentions toward the expressers, whereby witnesses choose to affiliate with upward gratitude expressers the least (hypothesis 4 tested in Studies 2-3). The preliminary study and Study 2 were both pre-registered on www.AsPredicted.org and links to the pre-registration are provided in each of the respective method sections.

CHAPTER 6: UPWARD GRATITUDE EXPRESSIONS ARE PERCEIVED AS INAUTHENTIC (PRELIMINARY STUDY)

My theory and predictions are built on the assumption that there are differences in perceptions of emotional authenticity between upward and downward gratitude expressions. Although I do not specifically hypothesize this, I aimed to formally test this assumption in this preliminary study. So, in this between-subjects design, I explored one subset of conditions related to my hypotheses: the differential effects of witnessing upward gratitude expressions versus downward gratitude expressions on perceived authenticity and downstream affiliation. While my work considers how the combination of these variables (social hierarchy and the role of the perceiver) impact authentic perceptions of gratitude and consequential behaviors toward the expresser, no work has examined these variables separately, leaving a drought of empirical findings to draw from. So, the purpose of this preliminary study is twofold: (1) I aim to show that upward gratitude expressions will be perceived as less authentic than downward gratitude expressions, and (2) since the perception of gratitude can not be made without considering a specific perspective—either recipient or witness—this study includes the largely under explored perspective of the witness to demonstrate that they are likely to make different perceptions and alter their behavior given the relative power of the expresser. Together, this study provides supporting evidence for the assumptions my hypotheses build on. The method and hypothesized results of this study were pre-registered on AsPredicted.org: <https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=qm5ab8>

Preliminary Study Method

Participants. Participants ($N = 75$; 38 males, 36 females, 1 missing) were undergraduate students at a large South Eastern university. The survey took approximately 1 minute to complete and participants did not receive compensation for completing the study.

Procedure, Manipulation, and Measures. Participants were randomly assigned to receive a sheet of paper containing one of two statements, and then answer three short questions afterward. The statement at the top of the paper asked them to “imagine they witness a *professor/student* expressing gratitude to a *student/professor*”, thus creating the downward and upward gratitude expression conditions, respectively. Afterward, participants answered three questions related to perceived authenticity, desire to affiliate, and gender. Due to the time constraint, perceived authenticity and affiliation were single-item measures. Participants indicated perceived authenticity on a scale of 0 (not at all authentic) to 6 (very authentic), answering the question “*how authentic would you perceive that ‘thank you’ to be?*” They then indicated on a scale of 0 (not at all) to 6 (definitely) their answer to the question “*to what extent would you want to interact with that professor/student in the future.*” Lastly, they circled their gender identity. For an overview of the entire survey, see Appendix 1.

Preliminary Study Results

I performed a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), comparing the difference in perceptions of emotional authenticity between witnessing upward and witnessing downward gratitude expressions. Results show that there was a significant difference between these two conditions, such that witnesses of upward gratitude expressions perceived them to be less authentic ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 1.15$) than witnesses of downward gratitude expressions ($M = 4.68$, $SD = .87$), $F(1, 73) = 11.34$, $p < .005$, partial eta squared = .134, 95% CI [-1.261, -0.323]). See

Table 1 for all means, standard deviations, and correlation. See Figure 2 for a graph of the results.

A one-way ANOVA was also conducted to test the difference in desire to affiliate between witnessing upward and witnessing downward gratitude expressions. Results show that there was a significant difference between these two conditions, such that witnesses of upward gratitude expressions indicated less desire to affiliate with the expresser ($M = 3.62$, $SD = .86$) than witnesses of downward gratitude expressions ($M = 5.08$, $SD = .82$), $F(1, 73) = 56.47$, $p < .001$, partial eta squared = .436, 95% CI [-1.844, -1.071]). See Figure 3 for a graph of the results.

In order to test the extent to which witnesses of gratitude expressions wanted to affiliate with the expresser because of how authentic they perceived the expresser to be, mediation analyses using model 4 in the SPSS Process macro v3.4 (Hayes, 2018) with a bootstrapping method of 10,000 samples was conducted to assess the significance of the indirect effect. The direct effect of condition on greater affiliative intentions was significant ($B = 1.03$, $SE = .16$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.716, 1.353], $R^2 = .436$), such that upward gratitude expressers were perceived as less authentic than downward gratitude expressers; the indirect effect through perceived authenticity was also significant ($B = 0.42$, $SE = .12$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.194, 0.655], $R^2 = .673$). Findings from this study provide initial support for the proposition that upward gratitude expressers are perceived to be less authentic than downward gratitude expressers and additionally, that this perception of inauthenticity leads others to want to affiliate with them less.

CHAPTER 7: HOW POWER AND PERSPECTIVE INFLUENCE THE PERCEIVED AUTHENTICITY OF GRATITUDE EXPRESSIONS (STUDY 1)

The preliminary study results showed that witnesses perceived upward gratitude expressions as less authentic than downward gratitude expressions and that this perception of inauthenticity drove the witnesses to want to affiliate with the low power individuals less. The goal of Study 1 is to build on these findings by comparing the additional perspective of the recipients. In this study, I thus hope to show that the witness-recipient difference in perceptions of authenticity vary by the relative power between the expresser and recipient, and that there is a downstream interpersonal consequence when one is perceived as inauthentic. In this test of both Hypotheses 1 and 3, I conducted a 2 (upward gratitude expression vs. downward gratitude expression) x 2 (witness vs. recipient) between-subjects experimental design online.

Study 1 Method

Participants. Participants ($N=255$; 138 males, 113 females, 4 missing; $M_{\text{age}} = 35.32$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 10.42$; range = 18-75, 1 age missing) were recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and were asked to complete a survey on “Workplace and Leader Scenarios”. The survey was five minutes long and participants received a \$0.50 payment after completion of the survey. Participants completed the study if they had a 95% approval rate or higher and had at least 1000 Human Intelligence Tasks (HITs) approved. An a priori power analysis conducted using the pwr2-package in R (version 1.0) showed that in order to garner a medium effect with 80% power to test between-group differences, I would need a total sample of 128, which the current sample size meets. There were four participants that did not complete all of the measures

of interest. Thus, I removed them from all analyses. The final sample was $N=251$ (138 males, 113 females, 4 missing; $M_{\text{age}} = 35.32$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 10.42$; range = 18-75, 1 age missing).

Procedure and Manipulation. After agreeing to participate in the survey, participants read through a hypothetical scenario. The scenario, which was adapted from Kim et al. (2017), described John, who was either a supervisor or junior staff member at a local publishing company. The vignette also elaborated on what his responsibilities were in this role, to ensure that participants understood his high versus low power position. In order to create the four conditions of either receiving or witnessing downward or upward gratitude expressions, participants were then asked to imagine one of the following four situations: that they received an expression of gratitude from John at work as his junior staff member (recipient of downward gratitude) or supervisor (recipient of upward gratitude), or that they witnessed John expressing gratitude to his junior staff member (witness of downward gratitude) or supervisor (witness of upward gratitude) at work. The gratitude expression was, *“Thank you for being such a wonderful employee/boss. You always go out of your way to help the company and you work really hard. I’m thankful to be working with you.”* After imagining themselves in the situation, they answered questions about their perceptions of the expression (see Appendix 2 for an overview of the scenario and a complete list of measures and scales).

Validation Study of Gratitude Manipulation Method. The gratitude expression manipulations used in Study 1 (and Study 2) were adapted from the scenarios used in Kim et al. (2017) and further amended to enhance the “other-praising” function of gratitude (Algoe et al., 2016). The purpose of this validation study was twofold: (1) to corroborate that the gratitude expression manipulations used in each of the studies were perceived as equally grateful and (2) to ensure that these gratitude expression manipulations portrayed the emotion of gratitude above

any other positive emotion. To do so, I recruited a sample of naïve participants ($N = 228$; 113 males, 113 females, 1 self-described as non-binary, 1 missing; $M_{\text{age}} = 38.78$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 12.32$; range = 19-78, 1 age missing) on Amazon Mechanical Turk to complete a brief two-minute survey. Participants were told that they would read a short scenario and then answer questions about it. Specifically, they were instructed to imagine they work at a local company and while they were at work, they heard one of four messages (randomly presented), which contained the gratitude expression manipulations described above and two additional conditions referencing either a “coworker” or “person” instead of “boss/employee” (see Appendix 2). Critically, the relative power of the expresser was not included in the scenario description. Afterward, participants rated how much the message expressed gratitude (grateful, appreciative, thankful; $\alpha = .893$), happiness (happiness, joy; $\alpha = .792$), confidence (confident, proud; $\alpha = .625$), anger (angry, frustrated; $\alpha = .939$), and anxiety (anxious, nervous; $\alpha = .876$) on a scale of 0 (*not at all*) to 6 (*completely*).

Validation Study of Gratitude Manipulation Results. A multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to test whether the different gratitude expression manipulations had any significant effects on the emotion ratings. Results showed that there were no differences between the gratitude expression manipulations across any of the five dependent variables (in all cases, $ps > .05$). This suggests that regardless of whether the gratitude expression was directed toward a “boss”, “employee”, “co-worker”, or “person”, people perceived the manipulations to be equally as grateful, as well as equally as happy, confident, angry, and anxious. Importantly, within each gratitude expression manipulation, the means of perceived gratitude were higher than the means of any other emotion rating. In other words, each of the four gratitude expression manipulations were perceived to be more grateful than any other emotion. These results are promising and set the stage for the possibility that these gratitude expressions, within the context of power

relationships, may be perceived differently. See Figure 4 for an overview of the means of each emotion rating by manipulation condition and Table 2 for all means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliabilities by emotion variables.

Measures. After reading through the scenario, participants answered a series of questions about the gratitude expression. The items within each measure were randomized.

Perceived emotional authenticity. The main variable of interest was the perceived authenticity of the gratitude expression. This was assessed using 9 items that participants rated, on a scale of 0 (*not at all*) to 6 (*completely*). An example item is, “*John’s expression of gratitude was probably genuine*” (adapted from Kim et al., 2017) ($\alpha = .949$).

Desire to affiliate. I asked participants to indicate how much they would like to affiliate with the expresser on a scale of 0 (*not at all*) to 6 (*completely*). This was assessed with 4 items. An example item is, “*John seems to be someone I would choose to be around*” ($\alpha = .965$).

Study 1 Results

See Table 3 for all means and standard deviations by condition. See Table 4 for correlations, means and reliabilities among all variables.

Test of Hypothesis 1: Perceived Emotional Authenticity. To test hypothesis 1, I conducted a 2 x 2 between-subjects ANOVA and planned contrasts to examine how perceived authenticity varied by conditions. There was no main effect of witnessing vs. receiving gratitude, $F(1, 247) = .03, ns$, but there was a main effect of upward vs. downward gratitude, $F(1, 247) = 61.27, p < .001$, partial eta squared = .199, such that upward expressions were perceived as less authentic than downward expressions. There was also a significant interaction, such that witnesses of upward gratitude perceived them as the least authentic, $F(1, 247) = 14.32, p < .001$, partial eta squared = .055. Planned comparisons also indicated that witnesses of upward gratitude

perceived those expressions as the least authentic compared to all other conditions, $t(247) = -6.84$, $p < .001$. Specifically, they perceived them as less authentic ($M = 2.63$, $SD = 1.32$) than recipients of upward gratitude expressions ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.47$), $t(247) = 2.79$, $p < .01$, and witnesses of downward gratitude expressions ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 0.94$), $t(247) = -8.23$, $p < .001$, and recipients of downward gratitude expressions ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 1.20$), $t(247) = -5.68$, $p < .001$. Thus, these findings support hypothesis 1. See Figure 5 for a display of the means of perceived authenticity across all conditions.

Test of Hypothesis 3: Affiliation. Next, similar analyses described above were used to examine a potential downstream interpersonal consequence of perceived authenticity by assessing how much recipients and witnesses indicated they wanted to affiliate with upward and downward gratitude expressers. There was no main effect of witnessing vs. receiving gratitude, $F(1, 247) = 1.46$, *ns*, but there was a main effect of upward vs. downward gratitude, $F(1, 247) = 14.40$, $p < .001$, partial eta squared = .055. There was also a significant interaction, such that witnesses of upward gratitude wanted to affiliate with them the least, $F(1, 247) = 6.44$, $p < .05$, partial eta squared = .025. Planned comparisons also indicated that witnesses indicated they wanted to affiliate with upward expressers the least ($M = 2.63$, $SD = 1.32$) compared to all other conditions, $t(247) = -2.98$, $p < .005$. Specifically, they indicated less desire to affiliate with upward expressers compared to downward gratitude expressers ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 0.94$), $t(247) = -4.49$, $p < .001$. Witnesses' desire to affiliate with upward expressers was only marginally different than recipients' desire to affiliate with downward gratitude expressers ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 1.20$), $t(247) = -1.84$, $p < .07$, but not different than recipients' desire to affiliate with upward expressers ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.47$), $t(247) = .94$, *ns*. See Figure 6 for a display of the means of desire to affiliate across all conditions.

My third hypothesis proposed a moderated mediation, which means that the strength of the indirect effect depends upon levels of the moderator (Preacher et al., 2007). Particularly, I predict that the indirect effect of witnessing vs. receiving an expression of gratitude on one's desire to affiliate with the expresser through the mechanism of perceived authenticity depends on whether or not it is an upward vs. downward gratitude expression. In order to specifically test hypothesis 3, I used model 8 in PROCESS v3.4 (Hayes, 2018) with a bootstrapping command of 10,000 samples. Witnessing vs. receiving was entered as the independent variable, perceived authenticity as the mediator, affiliation intentions as the dependent variable, and upward vs. downward as the moderator of the path between the independent variable and the mediator. The index of moderated mediation was significantly different from zero, $B = -.88$, $SE = .25$, 95% CI [-1.406, -0.409]. The conditional indirect effect of witnessing vs. receiving gratitude on affiliation was significant and positive for upward gratitude expressers ($B = .46$, $SE = .19$, 95% CI [0.087, 0.849]), but significant and negative for downward gratitude expressers ($B = -.42$, $SE = .15$, 95% CI [-0.729, -0.139]). Results partially support hypothesis 3, suggesting that indeed, the indirect effect of witnessing gratitude on affiliation via perceived authenticity is significant for upward gratitude expressers—witnesses perceive them as particularly less authentic than recipients do, which decreases the witness' desire to affiliate with them. However, the indirect effect also exists for downward expressers, but in the opposite direction, such that witnesses perceive downward expressers as more authentic, and thus, want to affiliate with them more than recipients do. See Figure 7 for a display of the moderated mediation model. All moderated mediation results are presented in Table 5.

Supplemental Analyses: Perceived Gratefulness of Expresser as an Additional Measure of Perceived Emotional Authenticity

As an exploratory measure related to how authentic participants perceived the emotion expression to be, I also assessed the extent to which participants thought the expresser felt grateful to see if these results demonstrated a similar pattern as the authenticity results.

Participants were asked, on a scale of 0 (*not at all*) to 6 (*very much so*), how much they thought John felt grateful (grateful, appreciative, thankful; $\alpha = .950$). This measure serves as a potential rationale as to how perceivers evaluate authenticity, suggesting that they also evaluate whether or not the expresser's felt emotion matches their expressed behavior (Salmela & Mayer, 2009). In this case, perceivers are evaluating how grateful the expresser internally felt in addition to how grateful the expression was.

To test if there were any differences between conditions in how grateful participants perceived the expresser to be, I conducted a 2 x 2 between-subjects ANOVA. Results showed, similar to the results for perceived emotional authenticity, that there was no difference in perceptions of the expresser's gratefulness between witnesses or recipients, $F(1, 247) = .42, ns$. However, upward gratitude expressers were perceived to be less grateful than downward gratitude expressers, $F(1, 247) = 24.60, p < .001$, partial eta squared = .091, and there was an interaction between upward and downward expressers and whether it was a witness or recipient evaluating them, $F(1, 247) = 8.15, p < .01$, partial eta squared = .032. Also, similar to the perceived emotional authenticity results from this study, planned comparisons indicated that witnesses of upward gratitude perceived those expressers as the least grateful compared to all other conditions, $t(247) = -4.17, p < .001$. Specifically, they perceived them as less grateful ($M = 3.69, SD = 1.72$) than witnesses of downward gratitude expressions ($M = 5.09, SD = 1.00$), $t(247) = -5.54, p < .001$, and recipients of downward gratitude expressions ($M = 4.47, SD = 1.39$),

$t(247) = -3.07, p < .005$, but not of recipients of upward gratitude expressions ($M = 4.09, SD = 1.49$), $t(247) = -1.49, ns$. Though this specific outcome was not hypothesized, these results suggest that when perceivers evaluate the authenticity of an emotion expression they make similar judgments about the expresser's internal emotional state. See Figure 8 for means of perceived gratefulness of expresser across all conditions.

Supplemental Analyses: Does Expresser Gender Matter?

In order to address the possibility that these results were dependent on the gender of the expresser, I ran a replication of Study 1, but instead of the hypothetical scenario describing “John” expressing gratitude, the scenario described “Jane” expressing gratitude. Participants ($N=253$) were recruited from MTurk. Again, a power analysis conducted in R (pwr2-package, version 1.0) revealed that a minimum sample size of 128 was needed to detect a medium effect of mean differences between groups with 80% power. The procedure was exactly the same: participants were asked to read the scenario (describing Jane) and then answer questions about that hypothetical situation as if they were either receiving or witnessing an upward or downward gratitude expression at work. All measures were the same (perceived emotional authenticity, 9 items, $\alpha = .962$; perceived gratefulness of expresser, 3 items, $\alpha = .967$; affiliation, 4 items, $\alpha = .974$). Since there was no manipulation check included in the previous study, I added one here to confirm that participants understood their role and the direction of the gratitude expression. They were asked, “*In the hypothetical scenario you read, who was the person expressing gratitude to?*” Participants are included in the analyses if they got the manipulation check question correct ($N=169$; 95 males, 74 females; $M_{\text{age}} = 38.11, SD_{\text{age}} = 11.02$, range = 21-71), though the pattern of results remain the same if all participants are included.

First, I examined differences in perceptions of emotional authenticity. Similar to Study 1, there was also a main effect of upward vs. downward gratitude expressions, $F(1, 165) = 49.64, p < .001$, partial eta squared = .231; again, the witness vs. recipient main effect, nor the interaction were significant. However, planned comparisons indicated that witnesses of upward gratitude perceived those expressions as the least authentic compared to all other conditions ($M = 3.16, SD = 1.71$), $t(165) = -3.93, p < .001$. Witnesses of upward gratitude also perceived them as less authentic than witnesses of downward gratitude expressions ($M = 4.48, SD = 0.95$), $t(165) = -4.95, p < .001$, and recipients of downward gratitude expressions ($M = 4.55, SD = .94$), $t(165) = -4.88, p < .001$, but not of recipients of upward gratitude expressions ($M = 3.05, SD = 1.30$), $t(165) = .39, ns$. These results are similar to those in Study 1 and show support for hypothesis 1.

Second, I looked at the exploratory test of perceptions of the expresser's felt emotions to see if they were similar to perceptions of the emotion expression itself as an additional indicator of perceived emotional authenticity. Similar to study 1, a 2 x 2 between-subjects ANOVA showed that there was a difference in how grateful upward and downward expressers were perceived to be, $F(1, 165) = 29.39, p < .001$, partial eta squared = .151, such that upward expressers were perceived to be less grateful. However, there was no difference in perceptions of the expresser's felt gratitude between witnesses and recipients, nor was there a significant interaction. Planned comparisons indicated that witnesses of upward gratitude perceived those expressers as the least grateful compared to all other conditions, $t(165) = -2.97, p < .005$. Specifically, they perceived them as less grateful ($M = 4.05, SD = 1.89$) than witnesses of downward gratitude expressions ($M = 5.12, SD = .89$), $t(165) = -3.71, p < .001$, and recipients of downward gratitude expressions ($M = 5.22, SD = .79$), $t(165) = -3.79, p < .001$, but not of recipients of upward gratitude expressions ($M = 3.94, SD = 1.62$), $t(165) = .36, ns$. In relation to

the perceived emotional authenticity findings that were described in the previous paragraph, these results also show a similar pattern, suggesting that participants seem to match the assessments of others' internal emotional state with the evaluation of others' authentic emotional expression. These findings for perceived gratefulness, and the similarity between this outcome and perceived emotional authenticity, are consistent with results described in Study 1 when "John" was expressing gratitude.

Third, I looked at differences in desire to affiliate with the expresser. The results here parallel those of authenticity, such that there was a difference between desire to affiliate with upward expressers vs. downward expressers (also found in Study 1), $F(1, 165) = 9.26, p < .005$, partial eta squared = .053, but the witness vs. recipient main effect, nor the interaction were significant. Planned comparisons indicated that there was no difference on desire to affiliate between witnesses of upward gratitude expressions and all other conditions, $t(165) = -1.66, ns$; however, witnesses had a lesser desire to affiliate with upward expressers ($M = 3.86, SD = 1.92$) versus downward expressers ($M = 4.57, SD = 1.16$), $t(165) = -2.27, p < .05$. Lastly, as a test of hypothesis 3, a moderated mediation analysis examining if the witness-recipient difference on affiliation through the mechanism of perceived authenticity was conditional on the upward or downward gratitude expression, was not supported.

Overall, we see that in two separate samples, similar perceptions of emotional authenticity are made when considering the relative power between the expresser and recipient, such that people perceive upward gratitude expressers as less authentic. However, when the gratitude expresser is a woman vs. a man (i.e. "Jane" vs. "John"), the witness-recipient difference is mitigated, notably so for upward expressers. In fact, witnesses and recipients of

upward gratitude expressions, perceived Jane as similarly inauthentic and the interpersonal social consequences of affiliation are less consistent.

Study 1 Discussion

Study 1 showed that perceptions of authentic gratitude are dependent upon the relative power between the expresser and recipient and the role of the perceiver, that is, whether someone is witnessing or receiving gratitude. Specifically, witnesses of upward gratitude expressions perceived them as the least authentic (hypothesis 1), and in turn, they also indicated they wanted to affiliate with those expressers the least. The interaction between power and perspective was indirectly related to affiliation intentions through the mechanism of perceived authenticity, and I found that this indirect effect was significantly positive for upward expressers (hypothesis 3). For upward expressers, the witness-recipient difference was such that witnesses perceived them as less authentic, and, thus had less desire to affiliate with them. However, for downward expressers, witnesses perceived them as more authentic than recipients, which then increased their desire to affiliate with them. In the next two studies, I further explore *why* this witness-recipient difference in perceptions of authenticity may exist in an opposite or non-existent way for downward gratitude expressers compared to upward gratitude expressers.

CHAPTER 8: INSTRUMENTAL ATTRIBUTIONS AS A MECHANISM (STUDIES 2-3)

Study 1 demonstrated that perceptions of authentic gratitude are influenced by both the relative power between the expresser and the recipient, and role of the perceiver, such that witnesses of upward gratitude expressions perceived them as the least authentic. Study 1 also showed that perceived inauthenticity led to less affiliative behavior toward the expresser. The goal of Studies 2-3 is to further understand why these differences in perceived emotional authenticity arise. Therefore, I test the mechanism of instrumental attributions and aim to show support for all four hypotheses. Study 2 was an online 2 (upward gratitude expression vs. downward gratitude expression) x 2 (witness vs. recipient) between-subjects experimental design, that mimicked the procedures of Study 1, with an additional measure of instrumental attributions. Study 3 was also a 2 (upward gratitude expression vs. downward gratitude expression) x 2 (witness vs. recipient) between-subjects experimental design, but an additional aim of this study was to replicate results in a more realistic context with a different manipulation of power and assessment of affiliation intentions, both self-reported and behavioral. The method and hypothesized results of Study 2 were pre-registered on AsPredicted.org:

<https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=75u87x>

Study 2 Method

Participants. Participants (N=1,014; 542 males, 466 females, 3 self-described as agender or nonbinary, 3 missing; $M_{\text{age}} = 36.66$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 10.61$, range = 18-74) were recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and were asked to complete a survey on “Workplace and Leader Scenarios”. Participants who completed the previous study were excluded from being

recruited for this Human Intelligence Task (HIT) on MTurk. The survey was approximately five minutes long and participants received a \$0.50 payment after completion of the survey. Similar to the previous study requirements, participants completed the study if they had a 95% approval rate or higher and had at least 1000 HITs approved. I used the same approach to conducting a power analysis in R (pwr2-package, version 1.0), which documented a minimum sample size of 128. Three participants did not complete at least one of the measures related to the main variables of interest. Thus, similar to study 1, I excluded them from analyses. The final sample is $N=1,011$ (542 males, 466 females, 3 self-described as agender or nonbinary, 3 missing; $M_{\text{age}} = 36.66$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 10.61$, range = 18-74).

Procedure and Manipulation. Study 2 procedures and manipulations were exactly the same as in Study 1. Participants were asked to read the same scenarios about John expressing gratitude and then answer questions about that hypothetical situation as if they were either receiving or witnessing that upward or downward gratitude expression at work.

Measures. All measures in this study were exactly the same as Study 1 (perceived emotional authenticity, 9 items, $\alpha = .951$; affiliation, 4 items, $\alpha = .965$). However, I added one additional measure to test the mechanism of instrumental attributions. Participants were asked to report why they thought John expressed gratitude. They answered 7 items assessing their attributions of John's expression on a scale of -3 (*strongly disagree*) to +3 (*strongly agree*). For example, they indicated if they believed "John said that message to benefit himself" (Inesi et al., 2012). Since there is no instrumental attributions scale to date, additional items were adapted based on constructs like "strategic motivation" (Kim et al., 2017), "status motives" (Anderson et al., 2015), "other-enhancement" (Jones, 1964), and "perceived image concern" (Sezer et al.,

2019). Appendix 2 includes a summary of the measures used in this study, including a complete list of items used to assess instrumental attributions ($\alpha = .946$).

Study 2 Results

See Table 6 for all means and standard deviations by condition. See Table 7 for means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliabilities among all variables.

Test of Hypothesis 1: Perceived Authenticity. To test hypothesis 1, I conducted a 2 x 2 between-subjects ANOVA and planned contrasts to examine how perceived authenticity varied by conditions. There was a main effect of witnessing vs. receiving gratitude, $F(1, 1007) = 7.88, p < .01$, partial eta squared = .008, such that witnesses perceived the expressions as less authentic than recipients did; there was also a main effect of upward vs. downward gratitude, such that upward expressions were perceived as less authentic than downward, $F(1, 1007) = 193.29, p < .001$, partial eta squared = .161. Additionally, there was a significant interaction, such that witnesses of upward gratitude perceived them as the least authentic, $F(1, 1007) = 5.85, p < .05$, partial eta squared = .006. Planned comparisons also indicated that witnesses of upward gratitude perceived those expressions as the least authentic ($M = 3.02, SD = 1.48$) compared to all other conditions, $t(1007) = -11.05, p < .001$. Specifically, they perceived them as less authentic than recipients of upward gratitude expressions ($M = 3.45, SD = 1.32$), $t(1007) = 3.70, p < .001$, witnesses of downward gratitude expressions ($M = 4.35, SD = 1.19$), $t(1007) = -11.51, p < .001$, and recipients of downward gratitude expressions ($M = 4.38, SD = 1.15$), $t(1007) = -11.83, p < .001$. Thus, these findings support hypothesis 1. See Figure 9 for a display of the means of perceived authenticity across all conditions.

Test of Hypothesis 3: Affiliation. When it came to participants' desire to affiliate with the expresser, there was a main effect of witnessing vs. receiving gratitude, $F(1, 1007) = 4.72, p$

$< .05$, partial eta squared = .005, and also a main effect of upward vs. downward gratitude, $F(1, 1007) = 59.28, p < .001$, partial eta squared = .056. There was also a significant interaction, such that witnesses of upward gratitude wanted to affiliate with them the least, $F(1, 1007) = 12.96, p < .001$, partial eta squared = .013. Planned comparisons also indicated that witnesses indicated they wanted to affiliate with upward expressers the least ($M = 2.96, SD = 1.57$) compared to all other conditions, $t(1007) = -7.78, p < .001$. Specifically, they indicated less desire to affiliate with upward expressers compared to downward gratitude expressers ($M = 3.98, SD = 1.39$), $t(1007) = -7.97, p < .001$. Witnesses desire to affiliate with upward expressers was also significantly less than recipient's reported affiliation intentions toward upward expressers ($M = 3.48, SD = 1.39$), $t(1007) = 4.09, p < .001$, and downward expressers ($M = 3.85, SD = 1.36$), $t(1007) = -6.99, p < .001$. See Figure 10 for a display of the means of desire to affiliate across all conditions.

Next, to test hypothesis 3 that there is a conditional indirect effect on desire to affiliate through the mechanism of perceived authenticity, I used model 8 in PROCESS v3.4 (Hayes, 2018) with a bootstrapping command of 10,000 samples. The index of moderated mediation showed that it was different from zero, $B = -.22, SE = .09, 95\% CI [-0.399, -0.038]$. In support of hypothesis 3, the conditional indirect effect of witnessing vs. receiving gratitude on affiliation was significant and positive for upward gratitude expressers ($B = .24, SE = .07, 95\% CI [0.097, 0.383]$), but did not exist for downward gratitude expressers ($B = .02, SE = .06, 95\% CI [-0.096, 0.138]$). This suggests that for upward gratitude expressers, witnesses perceive them as particularly less authentic than recipients do, which decreases the witness' desire to affiliate with them. However, for downward gratitude expressers, there was little difference in perceptions of authenticity between witnesses and recipients, and in this case, perceived authenticity did not

drive one's desire to affiliate with the expresser. See Figure 11 for a display of this moderated mediation model.

Test of Hypothesis 2: Instrumental Attributions as a Mechanism. To test hypothesis 2 that there is a conditional indirect effect on perceived authenticity through the mechanism of instrumental attributions, I conducted another moderated mediation analysis. I used model 8 in PROCESS v3.4 (Hayes, 2018) with a bootstrapping command of 10,000 samples. The index of moderated mediation showed that it was not different from zero, $B = -.15$, $SE = .13$, 95% CI [-0.395, 0.099]; However, in support of hypothesis 2, the conditional indirect effect of witnessing vs. receiving gratitude on perceived authenticity was significant and positive for upward gratitude expressers ($B = .23$, $SE = .09$, 95% CI [0.067, 0.401]), but did not exist for downward gratitude expressers ($B = .08$, $SE = .09$, 95% CI [-0.093, 0.265]). These findings parallel those of the moderated mediation results described above. This suggests that for upward gratitude expressers, witnesses make instrumental attributions for their behavior, and thus, perceive them as less authentic than recipients do. However, for downward gratitude expressers, this indirect effect of instrumental attributions did not influence their perceptions of authenticity of the expression. See Figure 12 for a display of this moderated mediation model.

Test of Hypothesis 4: The Full Model. Furthermore, to test the full model in hypothesis 4, which predicts that instrumental attributions will serve as a first stage mediator and perceived authenticity as a second stage mediator, I used model 84 in PROCESS v3.4 (Hayes, 2018) with a bootstrapping command of 10,000 samples. Witnessing vs. receiving was entered as the independent variable, and then first, instrumental attributions, and second, perceived authenticity, were each entered as serial mediators. Affiliation was entered as the dependent variable. The upward vs. downward gratitude expressions variable was entered as the moderator

on the path between the independent variable and the first stage mediator. The index of moderated mediation did not show that it was different from zero, $B = -.11$, $SE = .09$, 95% CI $[-0.287, 0.074]$; however, I did see that in support of hypothesis 4, the conditional indirect effect of witnessing vs. receiving gratitude on affiliation was significant and positive for upward gratitude expressers ($B = .17$, $SE = .06$, 95% CI $[0.047, 0.298]$), but did not exist for downward gratitude expressers ($B = .06$, $SE = .07$, 95% CI $[-0.068, 0.199]$). This suggests that for upward gratitude expressers, witnesses make instrumental attributions for their behavior (the first stage mediator), which then leads to a decrease in perceptions of authenticity (the second stage mediator) and thus, witness' desire to affiliate with them. However, for downward gratitude expressers, there was little difference in instrumental attributions and perceptions of authenticity between witnesses and recipients. All moderated mediation results are presented in Table 8.

Supplemental Analyses: Perceived Gratefulness of Expresser as an Additional Measure of Perceived Emotional Authenticity

Again, as an exploratory test to see if one's perceptions of emotion expressions were similar to that of their perceptions of the expresser's felt emotions as an additional measure of perceived emotional authenticity, I asked participants to rate the perceived gratefulness of the expresser (grateful, appreciative, thankful; $\alpha = .939$). I conducted a 2 x 2 between-subjects ANOVA on the differences between perceived gratefulness of the expresser. Results showed that there was no difference in perceptions of the expresser's gratefulness between witnesses or recipients, $F(1, 1007) = .47$, *ns*, but this outcome does not map on to the authenticity results in this study whereby witnesses perceived the expressions as less authentic. However, upward gratitude expressers were perceived to be less grateful than downward gratitude expressers, $F(1, 1007) = 85.19$, $p < .001$, partial eta squared = .078, and there was an interaction between upward and downward expressers and whether it was a witness or recipient evaluating them, $F(1, 1007)$

= 7.74, $p < .01$, partial eta squared = .008, which are similar patterns for the perceived authenticity results described above. Planned comparisons also indicated that witnesses of upward gratitude perceived those expressers as the least grateful compared to all other conditions, $t(1007) = -7.33$, $p < .001$. Specifically, they perceived them as less grateful ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 1.46$) than recipients of upward gratitude expressions ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 1.49$), $t(1007) = 2.45$, $p < .05$, witnesses of downward gratitude expressions ($M = 5.04$, $SD = 1.06$), $t(1007) = -8.47$, $p < .001$, and recipients of downward gratitude expressions ($M = 4.87$, $SD = 1.09$), $t(1007) = -7.02$, $p < .001$. Again, this specific outcome was not hypothesized, but these results suggest that there is a similar pattern in judgments when perceivers evaluate the authenticity of an emotion expression with the expresser's internal emotional state. These findings also replicate those found in Study 1. See Figure 13 for means of perceived gratefulness of expresser across all conditions.

Study 3 Method

Participants. Participants ($N=200$; 107 males, 89 females, 4 missing; $M_{age} = 20.30$, $SD_{age} = 0.97$; range = 18-24) were undergraduate business students at a large southeastern university. They were recruited to complete a 60-min study for 1 course credit. Similar to the previous studies, a power analysis using R (pwr2-package, version 1.0) was conducted, and results showed that in order to garner a medium effect with 80% power, I would need a sample of 128. Given the limited number in the credit pool, we collected data from as many participants as possible. To provide a strict test of my hypotheses, I included individuals in analyses that answered the power and role manipulation checks correctly (detailed below), to be sure that results indicate those who understood the direction of the gratitude message and their own sense

of power relative to the expresser. Thus, the final sample is $N = 181$ (96 males, 81 females, 4 missing; $M_{\text{age}} = 20.26$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 0.97$; range = 18-24).

Procedure and Manipulations. Participants arrived to the study in groups ranging from 5-12 people and the experimenter began by reading them instructions out loud. Instructions emphasized that participants would be interacting in a 3-person group, whereby one person would be assigned a “supervisor” position, another would receive a “subordinate” position, and the third person would simply be removed from the power dynamic and become an “observer” of the supervisor-subordinate interaction. In actuality, half the participants in each session were randomly assigned to be an “observer” (i.e. a witness of a gratitude expression), and half were randomly assigned to be a “subordinate” or a “supervisor” (i.e. recipients of gratitude expressions), whom unbeknownst to them, were not actually interacting with their high- or low-power counterpart.

Once participants listened to instructions, entered one of two lab rooms and agreed to participate in the study, they began their first task. The first task was to write instructions on a notecard for how to assemble a cabinet, provided the pictures of tools they were presented with on the computer screen. Once finished, the experimenter collected their written instructions and took them outside the room to assess them. Next, the experimenter returned to the room and randomly assigned participants to a supervisor, subordinate, or observer role. In one room, there was always one of two roles: a witness and either a supervisor/subordinate, depending on if it was an upward or downward expression condition. The supervisor/subordinate’s counterpart was supposedly in the room across the hall. In reality though, the other room also contained either a witness or a supervisor/subordinate.

Each participant was provided verbal instructions about their responsibilities. The supervisor was put in a position of power where they had to evaluate the instructions they would receive from their subordinate and provide feedback to them. If their group had the best instructions at the end of the study, they would win \$50 and the supervisor was in charge of allocating the money. The supervisor was also in charge of choosing tasks for the subordinate to do later in the session. In contrast, the subordinate was told that they had less power than the supervisor. Their role was to look at the instructions from their supervisor and suggest feedback. They were also given information about what the supervisor had power over. The third person in the group was simply the witness, removed from the power dynamic, but they still overheard all the instructions provided to the supervisors/subordinates in the session. They were told that they would complete a task on the computer while the other 2 individuals interacted via an exchange of notecards. Once this was completed, the experimenter would bring them the notecard interaction of the supervisor-subordinate dyad from their group.

Once assigned a role, the supervisors and subordinates received cabinet building instructions ostensibly written by their counterpart, but these were actually all exactly the same and prescribed. Participants then wrote their feedback to their higher or lower power counterparts. The experimenter collected this feedback in a folder and told the participant that their supervisor/subordinate partner would then look over the feedback and send a “message” back. After a couple minutes, participants received a “message” from their supervisor or subordinate in the opposite room, containing the gratitude expression. In this “message”, the supervisor/subordinate thanked their counterpart for taking the time to write feedback and said they were really grateful (adapted from Inesi et al., 2012). This message was also the exact same

and prescribed for everyone. After viewing the message, they continued on with the questionnaire.

At this point, the experimenter distributed the folders containing the supervisor-subordinate notecards on (a) instructions for building the cabinet, (b) feedback on instructions, and (c) message containing the gratitude expression to the witnesses within each group. The witness reviewed the interaction by reading the notecards and then continued with the survey. In the last part of the questionnaire, all participants rated the perceived authenticity of the gratitude expression, as well as additional interpersonal perceptions of and behaviors toward the expresser; they also answered manipulation check questions. To align with the cover story, all the notecards participants saw were prescribed with matching handwriting, from the supervisor or subordinate. Throughout the session, the experimenter made it seem as though they were delivering the notecards between the two lab rooms, to the participant's counterpart, when in fact, they were not. See Figure 14 for an overview of Study 3 Procedure.

Measures. After reading through the scenario, participants answered a series of questions that asked them to rate the perceived authenticity of the gratitude expression, how instrumental, typical, and appropriate they thought the expresser's behavior was, and then make perception ratings about the expresser's emotions, warmth, competence, and confidence. Lastly, they answered items related to affiliative behavior toward the expresser. The measures were presented in the following order, and the items within each measure were randomized. For a list of all measures and scales, see Appendix 3.

Perceived emotional authenticity. The main variable of interest was perceived emotional authenticity. This was assessed using 7 items that participants rated on a scale of -3 (*strongly*

disagree) to +3 (*strongly agree*). An example item is, “*the (supervisor/subordinate)’s expression was probably genuine*” (adapted from Kim et al., 2017) ($\alpha = .975$).

Instrumental attributions. This was assessed using 3 items that participants rated on a scale of -3 (*strongly disagree*) to +3 (*strongly agree*). The items were, “*the (supervisor/subordinate) sent that message to benefit themselves/because they were being manipulative/because they were being strategic*” (adapted from Inesi et al., 2012) ($\alpha = .758$).

Desire to affiliate. To measure affiliation, participants were asked to choose who they would like to work with on a task later in the session. They were presented three options: (1) a supervisor/subordinate from a different group; (2) the supervisor/subordinate they worked with in their group; (3) someone entirely different. The subordinate/supervisor was displayed depending on the role of the expresser in their group. If they chose to affiliate with the same supervisor/subordinate they worked with in their group, this was coded as 1. If they did not choose this option, their affiliation outcomes were coded as 0.

I also measured *perceived helpfulness of the expresser* as a potential indicator of the perceiver’s affiliation intentions. Being perceived as helpful is often associated with moral goodness (Barriga et al., 2001); presumably, individuals would choose to affiliate more with those they perceive to be “good”. Recall, that half the participants (i.e. recipients) were directly provided instructions on notecards about how to assemble a cabinet from their low or high-power counterpart, while the other half of the participants (i.e. witnesses) simply viewed these instructions at a later time. All instructions contained the exact same content and details. The participants who directly received the instructions provided feedback to their counterpart, and in turn, received gratitude for their time spent writing the feedback. Thus, the gratitude expressers were those that originally wrote the instructions. Both “recipients of gratitude” and “witnesses of

gratitude” were unaware that all the instructions were exactly the same and were asked to indicate how helpful they thought the gratitude expresser’s (i.e. subordinate’s/supervisor’s) set of instructions were on a scale of 0 (*not at all helpful*) to 6 (*extremely helpful*).

A measure of *social inclusion* was also assessed as a behavioral proxy of affiliation. Participants played a 3-person online “ball-tossing game”, called Cyberball³ (programmed in Inquisit v4.0; originally developed by Williams & Jarvis, 2006). While this game is typically used as a manipulation of social exclusion, all participants were actually included in the game. Instead, I calculated how likely they were to include their subordinate/supervisor gratitude expresser in the game as a measure of social inclusion. Specifically, this variable reflected the percentage of time the participant tossed to the expresser ($\# \text{ of tosses to expresser} / \# \text{ of total tosses}$). The player names in the game were customized to reflect the roles of each person in the group (i.e. supervisor, subordinate, observer), and each game consisted of 30 throws, while the participant had between 10-11 opportunities to toss the ball to the player of their choice. All participants began the game at the same time to maximize the believability that they were simultaneously playing the game with their group members.

Comprehension check: Perceived gratitude expression. To confirm that participants saw the feedback as grateful, I asked participants an open-ended question that read, “*What emotion did the supervisor/subordinate express in the last message?*” This item was used as a way to determine (a) that participants in fact read the message on the notecards they received, and (b) if they recognized that the message contained a gratitude expression. Participants’ open-ended

³ To view the exact instructions and game experience, please visit the following site (upward recipient condition example): <https://cyberballserver.azurewebsites.net/web?cbe=58a9e18f-2064-4e2a-bbdb-ff9914c6400d&condition=1&pid=>

responses were coded such that any answer mentioning words like, “gratitude/gratefulness/appreciation/thankfulness” as 1, and anything else that did not mention emotion items related to gratitude as 0.

Manipulation checks: Relative power and role. To determine if participants understood the direction of the gratitude expression and what their power role was relative to the expresser, I asked them two questions at the end of the survey. One question asked, “*Who was the [supervisor/subordinate] sending the message to?*” and participants indicated either (1) their supervisor/subordinate, (2) another subordinate, (3) another supervisor, (4) and observer. A second question asked, “*Relative to the person who sent the last message, how much power do you have over them?*” and participants chose either (1) I have more power than they do, (2) I have less power than they do, (3) We have equal amounts of power, (4) I am not sure, or (5) N/A: I do not have a power role. As noted above, participants who answered these questions correctly, given their assigned power role in the study, were included in the following analyses.

Study 3 Results

See Table 9 for all means and standard deviations by condition. See Table 10 for means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliabilities among all variables.

Comprehension Check: Perceived Gratitude Expression. To see if participants perceived the supervisor or subordinate expresser as expressing gratitude in their notecard feedback, I analyzed their coded open-ended responses. Recall, these were coded as any mention of gratitude, gratefulness, appreciation, or thankfulness as 1, and anything else that did not mention emotions related to gratitude as 0. Approximately 85.1% of the participants stated that they perceived the subordinate/supervisor as expressing gratitude. Results from a logistic regression show that there was no difference between any of the conditions on perceptions of

how grateful the expresser was ($\beta = .30$, $SE = .19$, $df = 1$, $Wald = 2.48$, ns), which suggest that even though participants recognized the expressed gratitude, the relative power and their perspective had the potential to shape differences in how authentic they perceived that gratitude expression to be.

Test of Hypothesis 1: Perceived Authenticity. Similar to previous analyses, in order to test Hypothesis 1 that witnesses of upward gratitude expressions perceived them as less authentic, I conducted a 2 x 2 between-subjects ANOVA and follow-up planned contrasts. In contrast to studies 1 and 2, there was a main effect of witnessing vs. receiving gratitude, $F(1, 177) = 5.56$, $p < .05$, partial eta squared = .03, but no main effect of upward vs. downward gratitude, $F(1, 177) = 1.29$, ns . There was also no significant interaction, $F(1, 177) = 2.46$, ns . However, even though there were no main effects observed, planned comparisons showed evidence supporting Hypothesis 1: witnesses of upward gratitude perceived those expressions as the least authentic ($M = -.32$, $SD = 1.61$) compared to all other conditions, $t(177) = 3.6$, $p < .001$. Specifically, they perceived them as less authentic than recipients of upward gratitude expressions ($M = .63$, $SD = 1.62$), $t(177) = -2.58$, $p < .05$, and witnesses of downward ($M = .34$, $SD = 1.76$), $t(177) = 3.11$, $p < .005$, and recipients of downward ($M = .53$, $SD = 1.48$), $t(177) = -3.14$, $p < .005$, gratitude expressions. See Figure 15 for a display of perceived authenticity across all conditions.

Test of Hypothesis 3: Affiliation. In order to test whether or not witnesses and recipients wanted to affiliate with expressers based on whether they saw an upward or downward gratitude expression, I conducted a logistic regression on participant's choice to interact with that same supervisor/subordinate on a subsequent task or someone else. My independent variables were perspective (witnessing vs. receiving) and the relative power of the expresser (upward vs.

downward), and these were entered into the model to predict my dependent variable of affiliation intentions. Results show that condition significantly predicted who participants indicated they wanted to work with ($\beta = -.68$, $SE = .24$, $df = 1$, $Wald = 8.23$, $p < .005$). While there was no difference in who participants chose to interact with between the upward and downward conditions ($\beta = .62$, $SE = .47$, $df = 1$, $Wald = 1.75$, ns), there was a difference between those in the witness vs. recipient role ($\beta = 2.52$, $SE = .76$, $df = 1$, $Wald = 11.01$, $p < .005$). Interestingly, while only 4.3% of upward recipients, and 0% of downward recipients, chose to interact with a different supervisor/subordinate outside of their group, 17.4% of downward witnesses and 26.7% of upward witnesses chose to interact with a different supervisor and subordinate, respectively, $\chi^2(3) = 18.77$, $p < .001$. See Figure 16 for a display of the percentages.

Logistic regression results also show that perceived authenticity significantly predicts who participants choose to work with ($\beta = .56$, $SE = .16$, $df = 1$, $Wald = 12.05$, $p < .005$). Similar to previous studies, I tested my moderated mediation hypothesis 3 using model 8 in PROCESS v3.4 (Hayes, 2018) with a bootstrapping command of 10,000 samples. The index of moderated mediation showed that it was not different from zero, $B = -.36$, $SE = .28$, 95% CI [-1.001, 0.104]. However, in support of hypothesis 3, the conditional indirect effect of witnessing vs. receiving gratitude on affiliation was significant and positive for upward gratitude expressers ($B = .45$, $SE = .25$, 95% CI [0.084, 1.037]), but did not exist for downward gratitude expressers ($B = .09$, $SE = .19$, 95% CI [-0.233, 0.555]). Consistent with study 2, results suggest that for upward gratitude expressers, witnesses perceive them as particularly less authentic than recipients do, which decreases the witness' desire to affiliate with them. However, this was not the case for downward expressers. See Figure 17 for a display of this moderated mediation model.

Perceived helpfulness of the expresser. This outcome variable was measured as an indicator of the perceiver's affiliation intentions toward the expresser. I conducted a 2 x 2 between-subjects ANOVA and follow-up planned contrasts to assess if there were any differences on how helpful participants perceived the gratitude expresser's instructions to be. There was a main effect of witnessing vs. receiving gratitude, $F(1, 177) = 7.49, p < .01$, partial eta squared = .041, but no main effect of upward vs. downward gratitude, $F(1, 177) = .0, ns$. There was also no significant interaction, $F(1, 177) = 2.16, ns$. Supporting Hypothesis 1, planned comparisons also indicated that witnesses perceived the upward expressers' instructions as the least helpful compared to all other conditions ($M = 3.89, SD = 1.43$), $t(177) = -2.42, p < .05$, and especially compared to recipients of upward expressions ($M = 4.59, SD = .75$), $t(177) = 2.98, p < .005$. There were no other significant differences in perceived helpfulness of the expresser compared to witnesses of downward gratitude expressions ($M = 4.13, SD = 1.17$) or recipients of downward gratitude expressions ($M = 4.34, SD = 1.01$). However, a moderated mediation analysis following the procedure to test hypothesis 3, using model 8 in PROCESS v3.4 (Hayes, 2018) with a bootstrapping command of 10,000 samples, showed that the conditional indirect effect of witnessing vs. receiving gratitude on perceived helpfulness of the expresser was significant and positive for upward gratitude expressers ($B = .17, SE = .08, 95\% CI [0.041, 0.353]$), but did not exist for downward gratitude expressers ($B = .03, SE = .06, 95\% CI [-0.089, 0.167]$). In support of hypothesis 3, this suggests that for upward gratitude expressers, witnesses who perceived them as less authentic also thought their instructions were the least helpful.

Social inclusion. This outcome variable was a behavioral measure of affiliation toward the expresser. I conducted a 2 x 2 between-subjects ANOVA and follow-up planned contrasts to assess if there were any differences in how often participants chose to toss the ball to their

respective subordinate/supervisor who expressed gratitude. There was a main effect of witnessing vs. receiving gratitude, $F(1, 174) = 4.86, p < .05$, partial eta squared = .027, but only a marginal effect of upward vs. downward gratitude, $F(1, 174) = 3.72, p < .06$. There was no significant interaction, $F(1, 174) = 1.53, ns$. Planned comparisons also indicated an interesting, yet opposite, pattern in comparison to findings for authenticity and affiliation across studies 1-2. In the game of Cyberball, there was no difference in the extent to which witnesses included the upward gratitude expressers ($M = .51, SD = .14$) compared to all other conditions simultaneously, or separately, to recipients of upward gratitude ($M = .53, SD = .14$) or downward gratitude ($M = .52, SD = .11$). Additionally, there were no significant conditional indirect effects found in a moderated mediation analysis examining the indirect effect of perceived authenticity on social inclusion. Overall, findings show that witnesses included downward gratitude expressers the least and recipients of upward gratitude included those expressers the most. Generally, participants who received an expression of gratitude were more likely to include their low or high-power counterpart in the game compared to participants who simply witnessed the gratitude expression.

Test of Hypothesis 2: Instrumental Attributions as a Mechanism. To test hypothesis 2, the moderated mediation model that there is a conditional indirect effect on perceived authenticity through the mechanism of instrumental attributions, I used model 8 in PROCESS v3.4 (Hayes, 2018) with a bootstrapping command of 10,000 samples. The index of moderated mediation showed that it was not different from zero, $B = -.38, SE = .22, 95\% CI [-0.855, 0.029]$; however, in support of hypothesis 2, the conditional indirect effect of witnessing vs. receiving gratitude on perceived authenticity was significant and positive for upward gratitude expressers ($B = .39, SE = .16, 95\% CI [0.107, 0.713]$), but did not exist for downward gratitude expressers

($B = .01$, $SE = .16$, 95% CI [-0.308, 0.312]). These findings parallel those of the moderated mediation results und in Study 2. This suggests that for upward gratitude expressers, witnesses make instrumental attributions for their behavior, and thus, perceive them as less authentic than recipients do. However, for downward gratitude expressers, this indirect effect of instrumental attributions did not influence their perceptions of authenticity of the expression. See Figure 18 for a display of this moderated mediation model.

Test of Hypothesis 4: The Full Model. In order to test the full model, predicting that instrumental attributions will serve as a first stage mediator, influencing perceptions of authenticity and subsequently, affiliation behaviors, I used model 84 in PROCESS v3.4 (Hayes, 2018) with a bootstrapping command of 10,000 samples. Similar to Study 2, witnessing vs. receiving was entered as the independent variable, instrumental attributions and perceived authenticity were each entered as serial mediators, affiliation was entered as the dependent variable, and upward vs. downward gratitude expressions was entered as the moderator between the independent variable and the first stage mediator of instrumental attributions. The index of moderated mediation did not show that it was different from zero, $B = -.17$, $SE = .13$, 95% CI [-0.488, 0.021]; however, I did see that in support of hypothesis 4, the conditional indirect effect of witnessing vs. receiving gratitude on affiliation through instrumental attributions and perceived authenticity was significant and positive for upward gratitude expressers ($B = .18$, $SE = .11$, 95% CI [0.024, 0.450]), but did not exist for downward gratitude expressers ($B = .00$, $SE = .08$, 95% CI [-0.151, 0.181]). These results replicate those displayed in study 2, suggesting that for upward gratitude expressers, the reason they affiliate with them less is due to both an increase in instrumental attributions, which then decreases perceptions of authenticity. All moderated mediation results are presented in Table 11.

Study 2-3 Discussion

Studies 2 and 3 both test the full theoretical model, which hypothesizes that when gratitude expressions occur, the interaction between relative power of the expresser and the role of the perceiver influence the instrumental attributions one makes for the expresser's behavior, which then influences how authentic the gratitude is perceived to be and one's desire to affiliate with the expresser. These studies demonstrate support for each of my four hypotheses. In support of hypothesis 1, witnesses of upward gratitude expressions perceive those expressions as the least authentic, also replicating the results from Study 1. In support of hypothesis 3, I find that these perceptions of authenticity have downstream interpersonal consequences, such that perceived inauthenticity of gratitude leads one to want to affiliate with the expresser less. These results also replicate those from Study 1.

Furthermore, Studies 2 and 3 extend findings from Study 1 by exploring how the mechanism of instrumental attributions shapes the differences between perceived authenticity. In support of hypotheses 2 and 4, I find conditional indirect effects in the expected directions: the witness-recipient difference in perceptions of authenticity vary by the relative power between the expresser and recipient, and this is mediated by the instrumental attributions that witnesses make about upward gratitude expressions (hypothesis 2). This indirect effect is similar for the outcome of affiliation, such that witnesses perceive upward gratitude expressers as engaging in more instrumental behavior than recipients do, and this leads to lower perceived authenticity and desire to affiliate with the expressers (hypothesis 4).

Lastly, Study 3 included two additional measures of affiliation intentions—perceived helpfulness of the expresser and social inclusion. While the outcome of perceived helpfulness of the expresser demonstrated the same pattern of my main affiliation measure, the social inclusion

measure did not. In fact, results demonstrated a slightly opposite pattern in comparison to the main affiliation measure. Unlike participants' choice of whether to work with the expresser or someone else of that same power position who was not in their group, the Cyberball game introduced two different choices: (1) whether they wanted to toss the ball to the expresser or someone of a different power position, and (2) in some cases, whether they wanted to toss the ball to the expresser or the benefactor. Both of these factors may have contributed to participants' decisions and thus, the interpretation of this behavioral measure of affiliation becomes convoluted because it is difficult to rule out what was driving these effects. Furthermore, there are additional minor reasons why this social inclusion measure may have demonstrated different results. For one, it is possible that participants did not believe they were truly playing the game with others in their group. This may have enabled them to be more careless in their decisions and allow other psychological processes, perhaps that of social comparison since they were sitting closely to other participants in the session or innate belongingness needs since they had the ability to simply include or exclude others and may have wanted to feel reciprocated belongingness, influence their choice of who to toss the ball to. Second, perhaps in this public online setting where multiple people were aware of the participant's choices, how inauthentic the expresser was became a mute point and the participant's social desirability to be seen as favorable and inclusive became a more salient determinant of their decisions. Due to the plausibility of these aforementioned accounts, the interpretation of this behavioral measure of affiliation does not provide a strong test of hypotheses 2 or 4.

CHAPTER 9: GENERAL DISCUSSION

A substantial amount of research has shown that gratitude leads to a host of positive outcomes for the expresser. However, might these findings have rested upon the assumption that others perceived the gratitude expression as sincere? In this paper, I aim to answer that question by presenting evidence from four empirical studies showing that expressions of gratitude from low to high-power individuals are perceived as less authentic than those expressed in the opposite direction, from high to low-power (preliminary study and Studies 1-3); interestingly, the perspective of the perceiver also matters. The interaction between the expresser and recipient's relative power and one's perspective suggests that third-party witnesses of gratitude expressions are especially more likely than recipients to perceive low-power expressions as inauthentic (Studies 1-3). Witnesses are more likely to make instrumental attributions for the low-power expresser's behavior, signifying that low-power, compared to high-power, individuals are motivated to express gratitude for selfish concerns (Studies 2-3). In the end, expressing inauthentic gratitude leads to a weaker desire to affiliate with the expresser (preliminary study and Studies 1-3). This research is an initial step toward disentangling the complexities of gratitude expressions, specifically in the context of organizations.

Theoretical Contributions

This dissertation contributes to the understanding of gratitude expressions in organizations, advancing both the emotions and social hierarchy literatures broadly, and the intersection of power and positive emotions more specifically. First, perceived *emotional* authenticity has been an overlooked construct in the emotions literature, as well as the

fragmented research on authenticity. Little work has theoretically or empirically examined the explicit links between antecedents or consequences of perceived emotional authenticity, and to date, no work has empirically tested factors that influence perceptions of authentic gratitude expressions. Together, these uncharted fields offer many open doors for building a more thorough theoretical framework of perceived emotional authenticity and further investigating how positive emotions, such as gratitude, are situated within this framework. Also, most work on gratitude is associated with positive outcomes (Algoe et al., 2019; Grant & Gino, 2010; McCullough et al., 2001) and has explored its influence within social relationships, which typically constitute friendships, strangers, and romantic partners. While a key function of gratitude is to build and maintain strong relationships (Algoe, 2012), I introduce a context that helps us further understand how gratitude may inadvertently lead to weaker relationships, provided one's hierarchical position. Specifically, the difference in power between the expresser and recipient creates the plausibility that alternative motives for the expression may be at play (Côté et al., 2013; Hochschild, 1983; see Grandey & Gabriel, 2015 for a review). Drawing from attribution theory and the impression management literature, findings in this dissertation allude to the potential that person perceivers make instrumental attributions for gratitude when expressed in ambiguous situations.

Second, I advance findings in the social hierarchy literature by calling attention to the much needed integration of positive emotions at work. Recently, only one paper has empirically examined the interpersonal outcomes of gratitude expressions in a context characterized by power relations (Ksenofontov & Becker, 2019), demonstrating that expressing thanks to a high-power group member undermines the low-power person's efforts to challenge the hierarchy. This dissertation adds to the empirical examination of gratitude expressed within a power hierarchy.

While power dynamics structure the emotions we intrapersonally experience and feel constrained to express or not (Keltner et al., 2003; Melwani & Barsade, 2011; Tiedens, 2000), I argue that these dynamics also shape the attributions we make of other's emotional expressions. Because the outcomes of emotions are context-dependent (Fischer & Manstead, 2008), there may be contexts in which gratitude expressers are perceived to be instrumentally motivated to enact this behavior, specifically when it is expressed from a low-power to high-power person in the social hierarchy. In turn, gratitude, and perhaps other positive emotion expressions that are typically associated with positive outcomes (Fredrickson, 2004), may have undesirable outcomes.

Lastly, this work underscores the distinctiveness of the third-party witness in emotion perception. I build on recent theory suggesting that gratitude has the capability of simultaneously influencing both the recipient and third-party witnesses by increasing both recipients and witness' affiliative and helping behaviors toward the expresser (Algoe et al., 2019). This dissertation extends this research by again, proposing that context changes the behavior of the witness. While recipients of gratitude expressions are more likely to focus on how the gratitude made them feel (e.g. socially valued), in the context of hierarchy, the expresser's motives become a prominent influence on witness' perceptions. Witnesses, due to their distant involvement in the interaction, are more likely to question the expresser's motives. Therefore, within the realm of the emotions literature, this paper offers insight into how third-party witness' behaviors toward emotion expressers differ from that of recipients, given their fluctuation in perceptions of emotional authenticity.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although the current studies collectively support my predictions about the influence of power and perspective on the perceived authenticity of gratitude, I acknowledge that like most

empirical research, there are design flaws that future research should address. A primary limitation across all three studies was the lack of a positive control condition. While the focus of this dissertation was on the unique functioning of gratitude within organizations, admittedly, results may not generalize across all discrete positive emotion expressions. Therefore, the question remains as to whether relatively low-power expressers are perceived as less authentic than high-power expressers only when expressing gratitude or if a similar pattern remains for the expression of other positive emotions as well. The positive emotions literature would benefit from a more rigorous exploration of how perceptions of authentic gratitude may differ from perceptions of other expressed positive emotions. Additionally, future research examining the impact of positive emotion expression within social hierarchies could consider the difference between “other-focused” (e.g. gratitude, empathy, admiration, etc.) versus “self-focused” (e.g. pride, joy, etc.) emotion expression. Another point of consideration when evaluating perceptions of authenticity might be between gratitude and positive socio-comparative emotions (e.g. compassion, admiration, etc.) (Melwani et al., 2012) because while little research has established that gratitude is an upward socio-comparative emotion, it may produce similar outcomes when expressed within a hierarchical relationship.

Another limitation of the studies was that affiliation was assessed by self-report measures. Although these measures captured individual’s intentions of wanting to work with or interact with the gratitude expresser, a behavioral indication of affiliation would strengthen the findings. In Study 3, participants played a game of Cyberball, after which, the amount of times they tossed the ball to the gratitude expresser was calculated as a measure of social inclusion. This measure was an initial step toward demonstrating a behavioral consequence for an inauthentic gratitude expresser. However, results from this study did not support my hypotheses

in the predicted direction and I believe this may have been the case for reasons that I previously described. First, it could have been a flaw of the methodological design, such that participants did not believe that they were actually playing the game with their group members. Second, this behavioral measure may have been an indication of how perceived emotional authenticity influences one's desire to interact with another individual privately, but in a more public setting, the perception of inauthenticity diminishes as a driver of one's behavior. However, I believe the main confound was due to the design of the game. The nature of Cyberball was such that participants had to make a choice to toss the ball to people in different power positions. Perhaps, when we are faced to make a decision between individuals with power differentials, we often feel bad for the person in lower power and compensate for those negative feelings by including them more. Additionally, participants were choosing to toss the ball to the gratitude expresser in their group and someone else who was not in the same power position as the expresser, and in some cases, even between the expresser and the benefactor. These are a different set of choices than those participants made when deciding who they wanted to interact with on a subsequent task, the main affiliative outcome that was analyzed in Study 3. In future studies, one key way to mitigate these issues and be able to better interpret the effects would be to have the participants play the game with the gratitude expresser and someone else who is of the same power position as the expresser. For example, if the gratitude expresser in their group was in a low-power position, the third person playing the game should also be a low-power individual from another group. This adjustment of the game design would provide a better theoretical test of my hypotheses related to affiliation (hypotheses 3 and 4) and allow for a more consistent interpretation of affiliation outcomes across all studies.

A final limitation of the methodological design of the studies is a weakness in demonstrating ecological validity. Though I used a combination of online and laboratory samples, these studies did not include individuals in real organizations. Study 3 was an attempt to create a working environment in which individuals interacted with one another and power dynamics consisting of differences in control over resources were established. However, the cover story may not have been as credible as I had hoped. Future research should recruit individuals from an organization to participate in a study that assesses their real gratitude interactions. By collecting this data, researchers could assess affiliation behaviors and relationship strength at both the dyadic and group levels, and further understand how these affiliative behaviors (or lack thereof) impact organizational outcomes, such as team performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, or burnout. Additionally, examining longitudinal effects of inauthentic gratitude on the expresser, over time, might also highlight the extent to which inauthentic emotional displays are costly for social relationships.

I believe this work is the beginning of a promising research avenue exploring the function of gratitude within organizations, and simultaneously extending research within the fields of emotional authenticity and the intersection of emotions and power. Future research should investigate additional moderators of perceptions of authentic gratitude expressions. For example, when we form perceptions of others, we may pay attention to characteristics related to the message itself, the person, the situation, or the organization at large (Gibson et al., 2009). First, characteristics of the message (i.e. the emotion expression) should be further explored. Prior research has noted that the intensity of an emotion expression is one variable that may effect its outcomes in organizations (Gibson et al., 2009). An emotion's intensity is key to understanding the full complexities of how emotion expressions impact us because differences within the

intensity of an emotion may evoke different reactions by the target of these emotions. Therefore, the intensity of a gratitude expression may increase perceiver's belief that the gratitude is inauthentic, even outside of the salience of power dynamics. When a gratitude expression is accompanied with other components that seem, "over the top" (e.g. an unrequested gift, amplified body movement, a lengthy duration), this may spark wariness of whether or not the expression is truly genuine.

Furthermore, future research should consider characteristics of the gratitude expresser, such as the frequency or typicality in which an individual expresses gratitude, differences between personality type, and the gender of the expresser. In terms of personality, individuals who engage in frequent gratitude expressions, regardless of their power position, may actually be perceived as less authentic because their gratitude has become normative, and associated with their personality type. Perhaps an individual who expresses gratitude more frequently is more agreeable, and so perceivers attribute those expressions to the fact that he or she is generally a "grateful person".

An area for further exploration lies at the intersection of gender research and emotion expression, in this case, gratitude expressions. Although there has been some work specifically examining gender differences and gratitude expressions (e.g. Kashdan et al., 2009; Sommers & Kosmitzki, 1988; Ventimiglia, 1982), whether or not men or women are expected to express gratitude (see Plant et al., 2000 for a related empirical test of 17 different discrete emotions), criticized for not expressing gratitude, or treated differently depending on how they express gratitude, are all open empirical questions. Little research has documented how we perceive gratitude expressions differently depending on if they are expressed by a man or woman; though, we can infer from theories related to gender stereotypes, social norms, and emotion expression,

that there would certainly be a difference in how grateful men and women are perceived and treated (Fischer, 1993; Fujita et al., 1991; Grossman & Wood, 1993; Hess et al., 2000; Kelly & Hutson, 1999; Plant et al., 2000).

The supplemental study included in Study 1 of this dissertation was an initial step at addressing this possibility. In this study, results showed that though the perceptions of emotional authenticity were mostly uniform across expresser gender, the affiliative intentions were not. When considering gender norms at work, perhaps women are expected to engage in socially pleasing and submissive behaviors more than men, and so perceivers feel less compelled to affiliate with them and engage in more positive interpersonal interactions that would reward them for their behaviors. Future research should build on these findings and further investigate how gender plays a role in perceptions of gratitude expressions (Kashdan et al., 2009). For example, an initial question regarding how we perceive men and women who express gratitude should be tested since we know little about this outcome. Building on this, it would be important to understand how gender and power, combined, influence perceptions of gratitude. While I've demonstrated that upward gratitude expressions are perceived as less authentic than downward gratitude expressions, perhaps the opposite is true when the expression is from a man to a woman in both situations. This may suggest that the perception of gratitude expressions depend not only on the gender of the expresser, but also the gender of his or her recipient (see Glomb & Hulin, 1997 for a similar rationale involving observer ratings of supervisor-subordinate dyads that vary on anger expressions and gender differences). Lastly, one could also consider the gender of the perceiver and how men and women who are either witnesses or recipients of gratitude expressions may have different perceptions given the ways in which they process information or the biases they hold. In general, more stereotypical biases related to gender may

be driving perceptions and affiliation intentions toward the expresser depending on whether the perceiver is a woman or a man.

Characteristics of the situation may include the power dynamics between the expresser and recipient. However, those do not exist in isolation. Indeed, third-party witnesses often maintain a position of power in relation to the expresser and recipient, and thus, future research should consider the power of the witness relative to the expresser and if this difference or similarity in power changes the witness' perceptions of authenticity. For example, perceptions of inauthenticity may be exacerbated for witnesses who see their low-power peers express gratitude to their boss (perhaps triggering great social comparison), but weakened for high-power witnesses who view others engage in downward gratitude expressions.

Lastly, future research would benefit from considering the characteristics of the organization as another moderator, or in other words, the culture of the organization. Previous work from Barsade & O'Neil (2014) highlight the significance of a culture of companionate love; a culture of love is positively associated with employee satisfaction and teamwork, and is negatively related to absenteeism and emotional exhaustion. Given the benefits associated with love, is it safe to assume that an organizational culture that inspires other positive emotions will similarly produce positive outcomes? Future research should test this presumption. For organizations that pride themselves on creating a "culture of gratitude" (though no work to date has built a theoretical foundation of this phenomena), in light of the current findings provided in this dissertation, careful consideration should be given to the possibility that creating a place where gratitude is common and perhaps, expected, may unintentionally decrease how authentic it is perceived to be.

However, it is important to note that the expectation and normative behavior of who should express gratitude in organizations is unclear, and an untested assumption in my model, as well as in the literature more broadly. To date, no research has defined the norms of upward or downward gratitude—whether expressing gratitude from a leader to a subordinate is more normative than a subordinate expressing gratitude to a leader. It is possible that the norms and expectations of expressing gratitude could be strongest for individuals in either power position. For example, a subordinate expressing gratitude to their supervisor may be performing an in-role behavior because if they fail to do so, they may be reprimanded or not receive organizational rewards. However, a supervisor expressing gratitude to their subordinate may be an extra-role behavior because they would not suffer consequences if it were not performed (Katz, 1964). In the current work, I draw from theories related to in-role and extra-role behaviors (Katz, 1964; Can Dyne & LePine, 1998) to suggest the latter and propose that because expressing gratitude may be perceived as a non-discretionary gesture for low-power individuals, but a discretionary one for high-power individuals, low-power individuals are perceived to be less authentic. However, there is no empirical evidence to directly support this claim about gratitude expressions as a discretionary or non-discretionary behavior for high and low-power individuals.

On the contrary, organizations may suggest that as part of a leader's "script", one should express gratitude toward their subordinates. This may emphasize the notion that gratitude is a normative and expected behavior for leaders (i.e. non-discretionary) because they are widely rewarded and recognized when they express it, yet may suffer social consequences from their followers if they do not. In opposition, subordinates expressing gratitude to their leader may not be considered a gesture that is part of their role and they do not gain rewards for displaying this emotion. Hence, an upward expression is counter-normative, not expected, and therefore,

discretionary. It is possible that when behaviors are normative, we view them as more authentic (e.g. downward gratitude expressions), but when they are counter-normative, we perceive them as less authentic (e.g. upward gratitude expressions) (see Gardner et al., 2009 for theoretical support of this possibility). Future research should test these assumptions of gratitude expression norms within a social hierarchy.

Practical Implications

Given the current gratitude movement in organizations and the recent involvement in exploring its functioning at work (Fehr et al., 2017), it is a suitable time for more scientific investigations of how this context shapes the outcomes of gratitude. While most research has highlighted the numerous benefits of expressing gratitude, individuals within organizations would serve themselves well to consider both positive and negative downstream consequences of expressing gratitude and what factors may influence either. Organizations value strong bonds and positive relationships in the workplace (Dutton & Ragins, 2017), and gratitude expressions have the potential to enhance those opportunities. However, the assumption that one will consistently foster positive relationships by expressing gratitude is flawed.

The situation in which one expresses gratitude should also be an essential concern because context shapes emotion perceptions (Gibson et al., 2009). The social hierarchical context is defined by relational and structural differences in power and status (Magee & Galinsky, 2008), and so the rank differences between other individuals and the expresser may influence how emotions are perceived. Despite how sincere or genuine an individual may feel when expressing gratitude to another, the relative power within the dyad shapes the motives and attributions that others make about the expresser's emotional display. Therefore, as the expresser, there are additional caveats to consider. Practically, when expressing gratitude at work, awareness of those

who have access to observe one's behavior is important; this awareness is increasingly imperative for low-power individuals, as they are the ones who may suffer the most destructive relational consequences.

Due to the role expectations and norms that are often associated with low-power positions, most would assume that expressing gratitude is an expected behavior of low-power individuals, but not high-power persons. An additional implication of this work as it relates to the expresser is the notion that relatively low-power gratitude expressers suffer greater affiliative consequences than relatively high-power gratitude expressers, even when expressing the exact same message. This contradictory expectation, yet negative outcome for low-power expressers, begs the question of how we then continue to encourage gratitude in organizations, while simultaneously mitigating potential consequences for employees. One such possibility is limiting the person perceiver's need to question the motive of the behavior. Part of this solution may reside in the content of the gratitude expression itself, for example, by providing less "other-praising" within the expression (Algoe et al., 2016). Though "other-praising" has been shown to help facilitate the positive link between gratitude expressions and close relationships, in the context of hierarchy, this may be a feature that backfires for employees who express gratitude to their supervisors. Therefore, in order to obtain the positive benefits that are characteristically associated with this emotion, one should be aware of *how* they are expressing gratitude and aim to reduce the believability of an alternative motive, thus heightening the authentic perception of their gratitude.

The current gratitude literature lacks empirical evidence linking gratitude to negative relational outcomes, but it does supply a host of work establishing that gratitude plays a powerful role in building close relationships (Algoe, 2012; Algoe et al., 2008; Fredrickson, 2004; Lambert

et al., 2010) at multiple levels (Algoe et al., 2019). Thus, decreasing this behavior at work is surely not the right tactic. Instead, managers should continue to encourage gratitude in organizations; however, they should be hesitant to urge this behavior just for the sake of creating a more grateful organization because perceivers, particularly third-party witnesses of these expressions, are privy to inauthentic gratitude.

Conclusion

Given the myriad of benefits that gratitude has to offer, organizations have increasingly begged the question, “how do we increase gratitude in the workplace”? While this question is important for numerous reasons, I believe it is equally as important to pause and realize that the benefits of expressing gratitude may not be a “one size fits all”. Instead, organizations should recognize how the context of their hierarchical structure may alter the perceptions of gratitude in the workplace. It is crucial to be aware of how others, perhaps outside the immediate interaction, may interpret our expressions of gratitude, and how our relative rank relationship between others influences those perceptions and subsequent interactions. Taken together, the provided evidence suggests that not all thank-you’s are perceived equally; instead, our relative power and perspective in the social hierarchy matter and influence when and why gratitude expressions are perceived as authentic.

Table 1*Means and Standard Deviations by Condition in Preliminary Study*

	Witnessing Upward <i>M (SD)</i>	Witnessing Downward <i>M (SD)</i>
Perceived Authenticity	3.89 ^a (1.15)	4.68 ^a (.87)
Affiliation Intentions	3.62 ^b (.86)	5.08 ^b (.82)

Note. N=75. Perceived Authenticity and Affiliation were measured with 1-item each. Their Pearson correlation is $r = .69$. Means with the same superscript within each row indicate a significant difference between those two conditions at $p < .005$.

Table 2*Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Reliabilities Among All Variables in Validation Study*

	1	2	3	4	5
1 Gratitude	--				
2 Happiness	.53**	--			
3 Confidence	.32**	.57**	--		
4 Anger	-.58**	-.17**	0.01	--	
5 Anxiousness	-.59**	-.19**	-0.03	.87**	--
<i>Mean</i>	5.53	4.68	4.15	.44	.52
<i>SD</i>	.88	1.11	1.21	1.25	1.26
<i>Alpha</i>	.89	.79	.63	.94	.88

Note. N=228. ** $p < .01$.

Table 3*Means and Standard Deviations by Condition in Study 1*

	Upward		Downward	
	Witnessing	Receiving	Witnessing	Receiving
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Perceived Authenticity	2.63 ^{a,c,e} (1.32)	3.25 ^{a,d} (1.47)	4.46 ^{b,c} (.94)	3.89 ^{b,d,e} (1.20)
Affiliation Intentions	3.54 ^b (1.49)	3.77 (1.56)	4.66 ^{a,b} (1.14)	3.99 ^a (1.36)
Perceived Gratefulness of Expresser	3.69 ^{b,c} (1.72)	4.09 (1.49)	5.09 ^{a,b} (1.00)	4.47 ^{a,c} (1.39)

Note. N=251. Conditions within each group of upward, downward, witnessing, and receiving were compared separately, along with witnesses of upward compared to recipients of downward. Means with the same superscript within each row indicate a significant difference between those two conditions at $p < .05$.

Table 4*Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Reliabilities Among All Variables in Study 1*

	1	2	3
1 Perceived Authenticity	--		
2 Affiliation Intentions	.69	--	
3 Perceived Gratefulness of Expresser	.69	.67	--
<i>Mean</i>	3.55	3.99	4.33
<i>SD</i>	1.42	1.45	1.51
<i>Alpha</i>	.95	.97	.95

Note. N=251. All correlations are significant at $p < .01$.

Table 5*Moderated Mediation Results in Study 1*

	Perceived Authenticity			Affiliation Intentions		
	<i>B</i> (SE)	LLCI	ULCI	<i>B</i> (SE)	LLCI	ULCI
Witnessing vs. Receiving	.62** (.22)	.18	1.06	-.23 (.19)	-.60	.15
Upward vs. Downward	1.83** (.22)	1.39	2.27	-.24 (.21)	-.65	.18
Interaction	-1.19** (.32)	-1.82	-0.57	-0.01 (.17)	-.55	.53
Perceived Authenticity	--	--	--	.74** (.05)	.63	.85
<i>R</i> ²	.24			.48		

Note. N = 251. LLCI = Lower level confidence interval. ULCI = Upper level confidence interval. Unstandardized coefficients are reported; standard errors are in parentheses. ***p* < .01.

Table 6*Means and Standard Deviations by Condition in Study 2*

	Upward		Downward	
	Witnessing <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Receiving <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Witnessing <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Receiving <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
Instrumental Attributions	.93 ^{a,b,d} (1.36)	.61 ^{a,c} (1.36)	-.49 ^b (1.46)	-.61 ^{c,d} (1.46)
Perceived Authenticity	3.02 ^{a,b,d} (1.48)	3.45 ^{a,c} (1.32)	4.35 ^b (1.19)	4.38 ^{c,d} (1.15)
Affiliation Intentions	2.96 ^{a,b,d} (1.57)	3.48 ^{a,c} (1.39)	3.98 ^b (1.39)	3.85 ^{c,d} (1.36)
Perceived Gratefulness of Expresser	4.07 ^{a,b,d} (1.46)	4.35 ^{a,c} (1.49)	5.04 ^b (1.06)	4.87 ^{c,d} (1.09)

Note. N = 1,011. Instrumental Attributions scale was measured from -3 to +3 while other scales were measured from 0-6. Conditions within each group of upward, downward, witnessing, and receiving were compared separately, along with witnesses of upward compared to recipients of downward. Means with the same superscript within each row indicate a significant difference between those two conditions at *p* < .05.

Table 7

Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Reliabilities Among All Variables in Study 2

	1	2	3	4
1 Instrumental Attributions	--			
2 Perceived Authenticity	-.81	--		
3 Affiliation Intentions	-.39	.55	--	
4 Perceived Gratefulness of Expresser	-.49	.66	.59	--
<i>Mean</i>	.11	3.79	3.56	4.58
<i>SD</i>	1.56	1.42	1.48	1.34
<i>Alpha</i>	.95	.95	.97	.94

Note. N=1,011. All correlations are significant at $p < .01$.

Table 8*Moderated Mediation Results in Study 2*

	Instrumental Attributions			Perceived Authenticity			Affiliation Intentions		
	<i>B</i> (SE)	LLCI	ULCI	<i>B</i> (SE)	LLCI	ULCI	<i>B</i> (SE)	LLCI	ULCI
Witnessing vs. Receiving	-.33* (.13)	-.57	-.08	.19* (.07)	.05	.34	.28* (.11)	.07	.49
Upward vs. Downward	-1.42* (.13)	-1.67	-1.18	.32* (.08)	.17	.47	.33* (.12)	.09	.58
Interaction	.21 (.18)	-.14	.56	-.25* (.10)	-.45	-.05	-.41* (.16)	-.73	-.03
Instrumental Attributions	--	--	--	-.71* (.02)	-.74	-.67	.18* (.04)	.09	.27
Perceived Authenticity	--	--	--	--	--	--	.71* (.05)	.61	.81
<i>R</i> ²	.19			.67			.32		

Note. N = 1,011. LLCI = Lower level confidence interval. ULCI = Upper level confidence interval. Unstandardized coefficients are reported; standard errors are in parentheses. * $p < .05$

Table 9*Means and Standard Deviations by Condition in Study 3*

	Upward		Downward	
	Witnessing <i>M (SD)</i>	Receiving <i>M (SD)</i>	Witnessing <i>M (SD)</i>	Receiving <i>M (SD)</i>
Instrumental Attributions	.44 ^{a,b,c} (.97)	-.22 ^b (1.39)	-.36 ^a (1.38)	-.38 ^c (1.14)
Perceived Authenticity	-.32 ^{a,b} (1.61)	.64 ^a (1.62)	.34 (1.76)	.53 ^b (1.48)

Note. N=181. All scales were measured from -3 to +3. Conditions within each group of upward, downward, witnessing, and receiving were compared separately, along with witnesses of upward compared to recipients of downward. Means with the same superscript within each row indicate a significant difference between those two conditions at $p < .05$.

Table 10*Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Reliabilities Among All Variables in Study 3*

	1	2	3
1 Instrumental Attributions	--		
2 Perceived Authenticity	-.47	--	
3 Affiliation Intentions	-.15	.28	--
Mean	-.13	.29	--
SD	1.27	1.65	--
Alpha	.76	.98	--

Note. All correlations are significant at $p < .01$; The correlations between desire to affiliate and all other variables are presented as point-biserial correlations since desire to affiliate is a categorical variable. N=181.

Table 9*Moderated Mediation Results in Study 3*

	Instrumental Attributions			Perceived Authenticity			Affiliation Intentions		
	<i>B</i> (SE)	LLCI	ULCI	<i>B</i> (SE)	LLCI	ULCI	<i>B</i> (SE)	LLCI	ULCI
Witnessing vs. Receiving	-.67* (.25)	-1.16	-.18	.56 (.32)	-.07	1.21	1.77* (.82)	0.17	3.37
Upward vs. Downward	-.81* (.25)	-1.3	-.32	.19 (.34)	-.48	.86	.31 (.55)	-.76	1.38
Interaction	.65 (.37)	-.07	1.37	-.38 (.44)	-1.26	.48	13.75 (474.81)	-916.87	944.37
Instrumental Attributions	--	--	--	-.58* (.09)	-.76	-.39	-.05 (.23)	-.49	.39
Perceived Authenticity	--	--	--	--	--	--	.46* (.18)	.12	.80
<i>R</i> ²	.07			.23			.31 (pseudo <i>R</i> ²)		

Note. N = 181. Unstandardized coefficients are reported; standard errors are in parentheses. The pseudo *R*² is the Nagelkerke statistic presented in the last model where affiliation is an outcome because it is a categorical dependent variable. **p* < .05.

Figure 2

Means of Perceived Emotional Authenticity by Condition in Preliminary Study

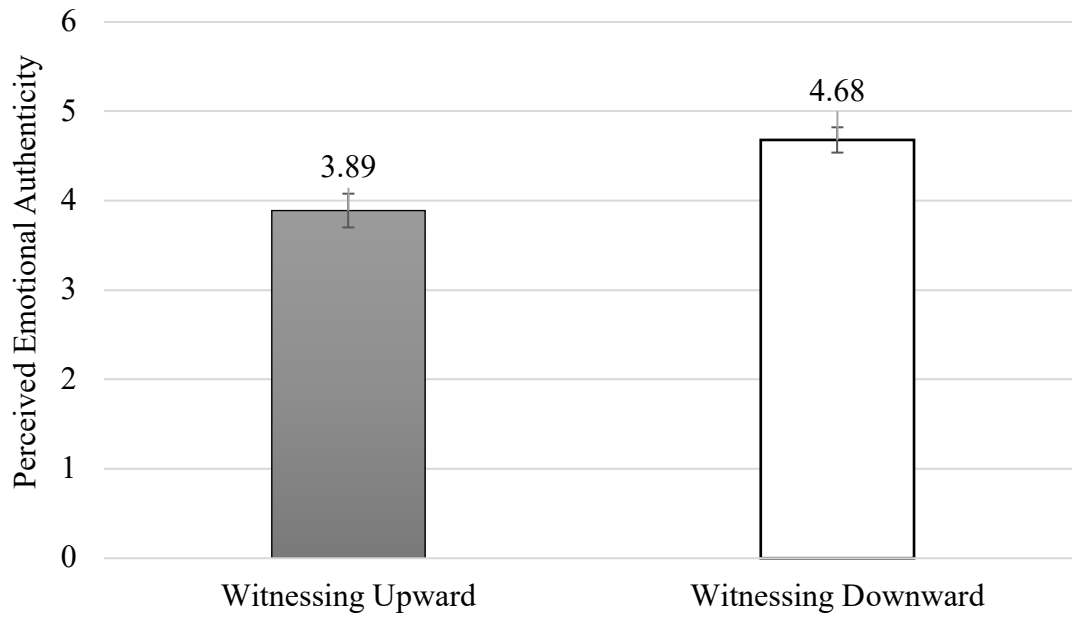


Figure 3

Means of Desire to Affiliate with Expresser by Condition in Preliminary Study

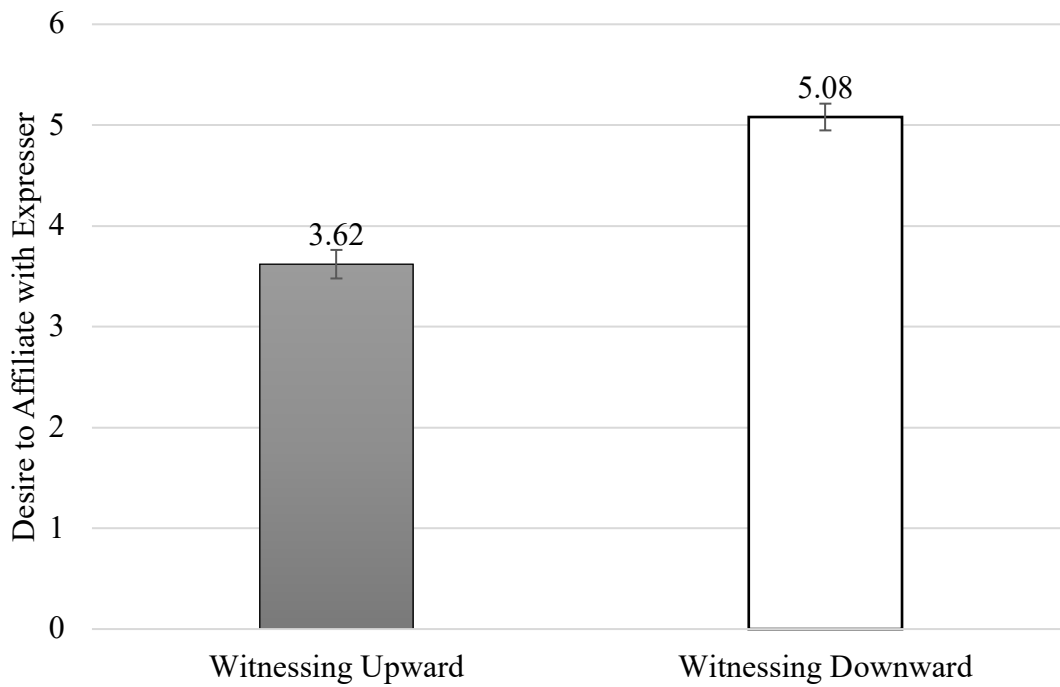


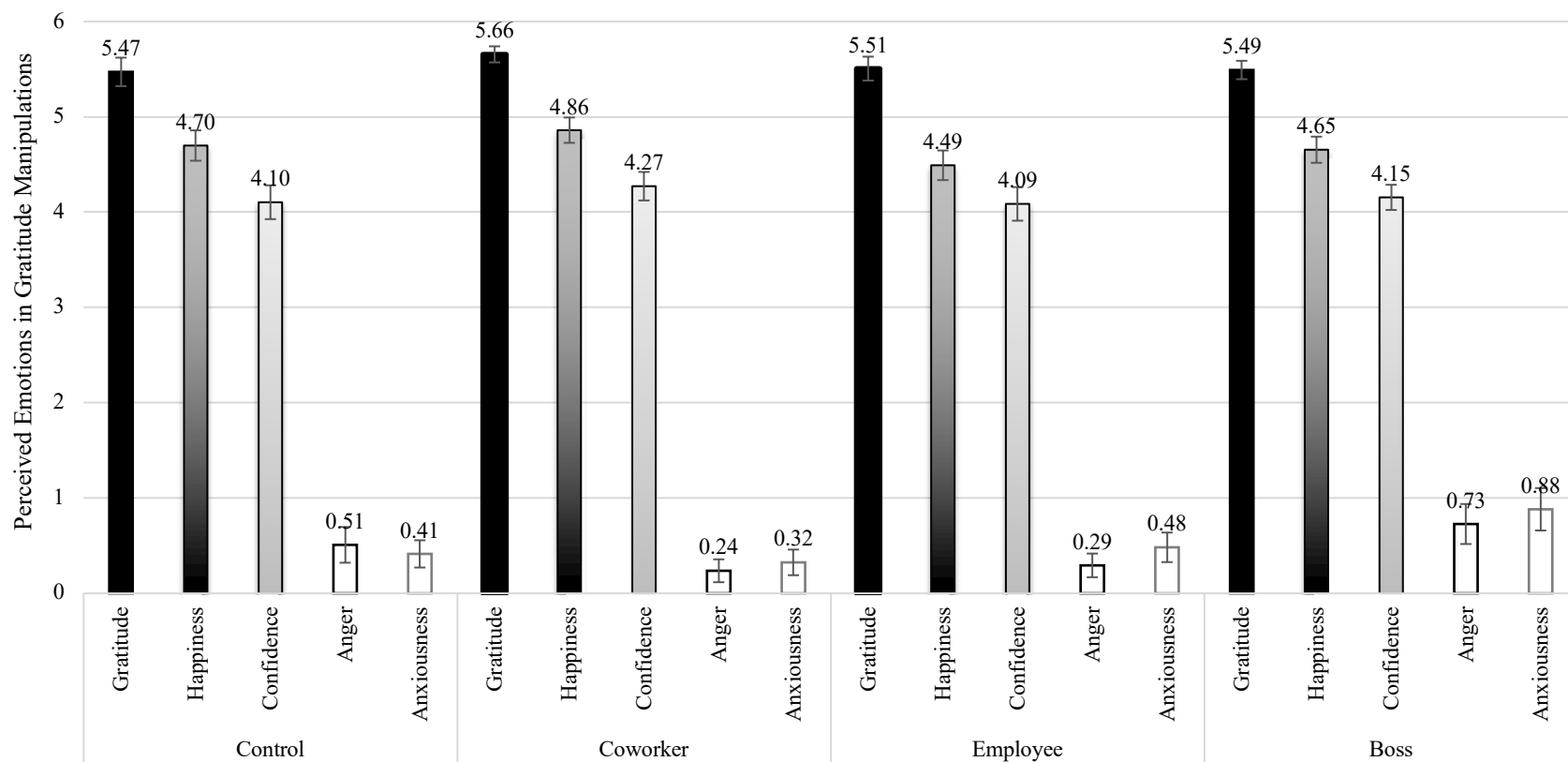
Figure 4*Means of Emotion Ratings by Condition in Validation Study*

Figure 5

Means of Perceived Emotional Authenticity by Condition in Study 1

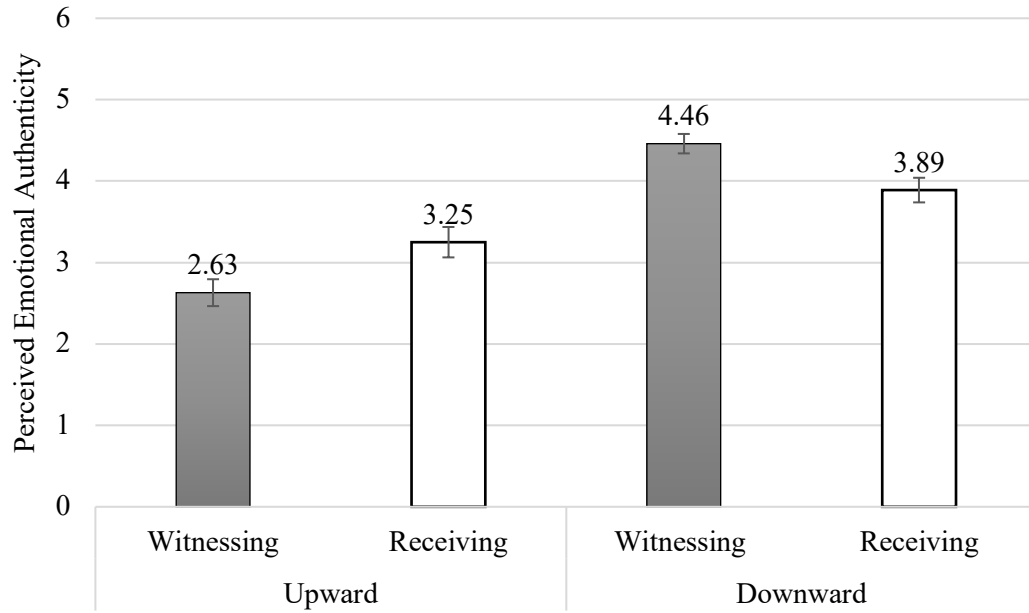


Figure 6

Means of Desire to Affiliate with Expresser by Condition in Study 1

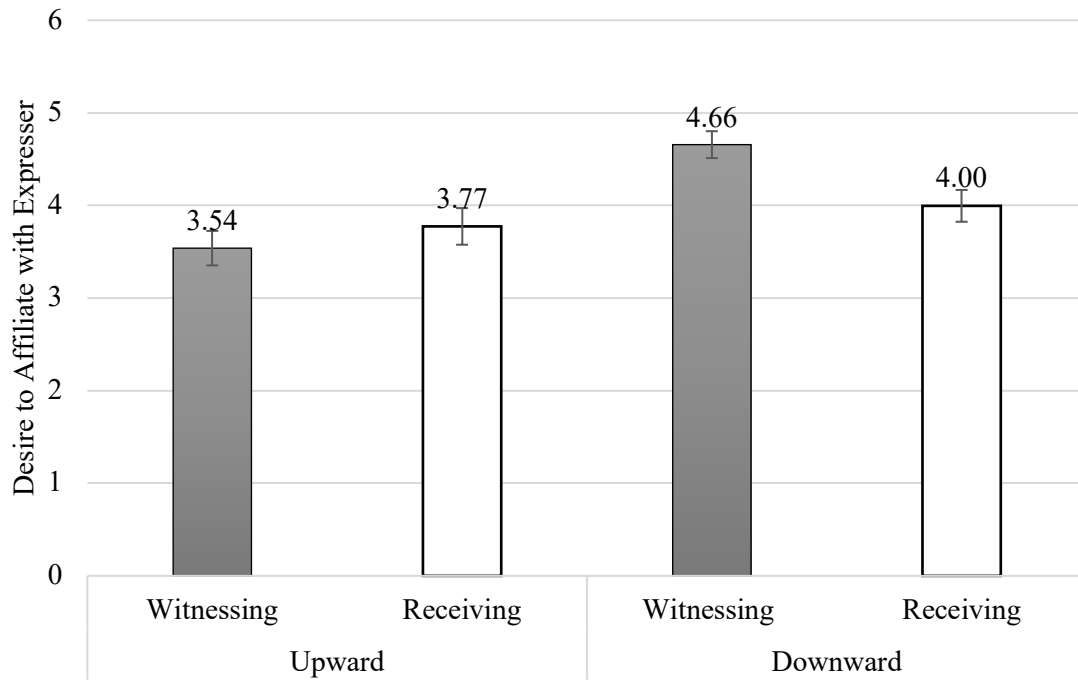
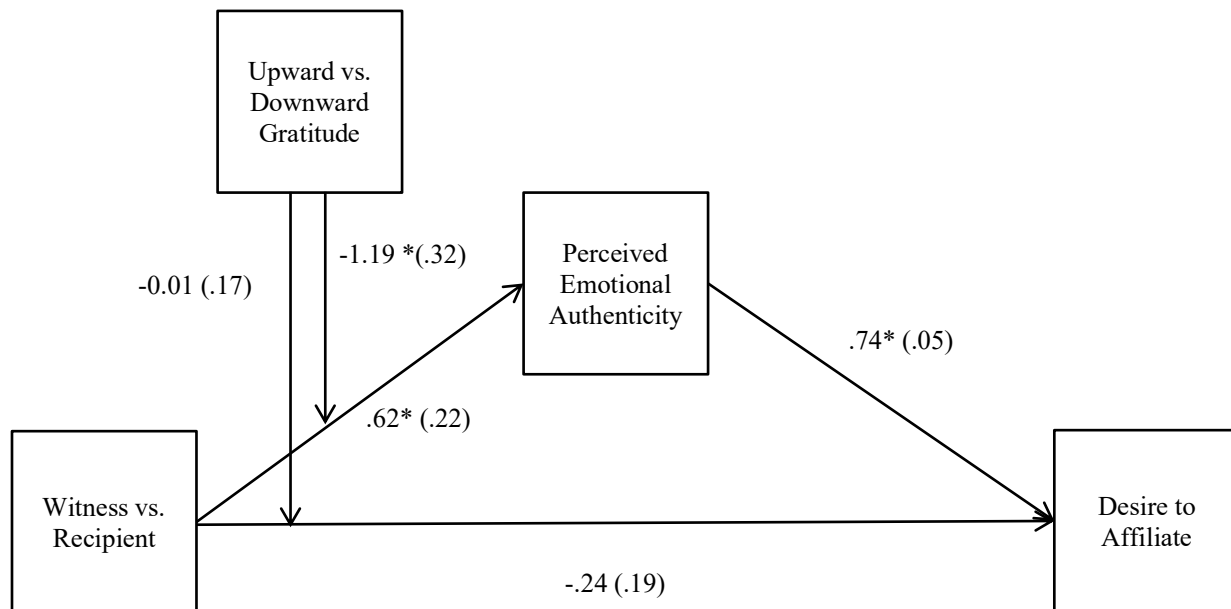


Figure 7

Moderated Mediation Model of Conditions Predicting Desire to Affiliate through Perceived Emotional Authenticity in Study 1



Note. $*p < .05$.

Figure 8

Means of Perceived Gratefulness of Expresser by Condition in Study 1

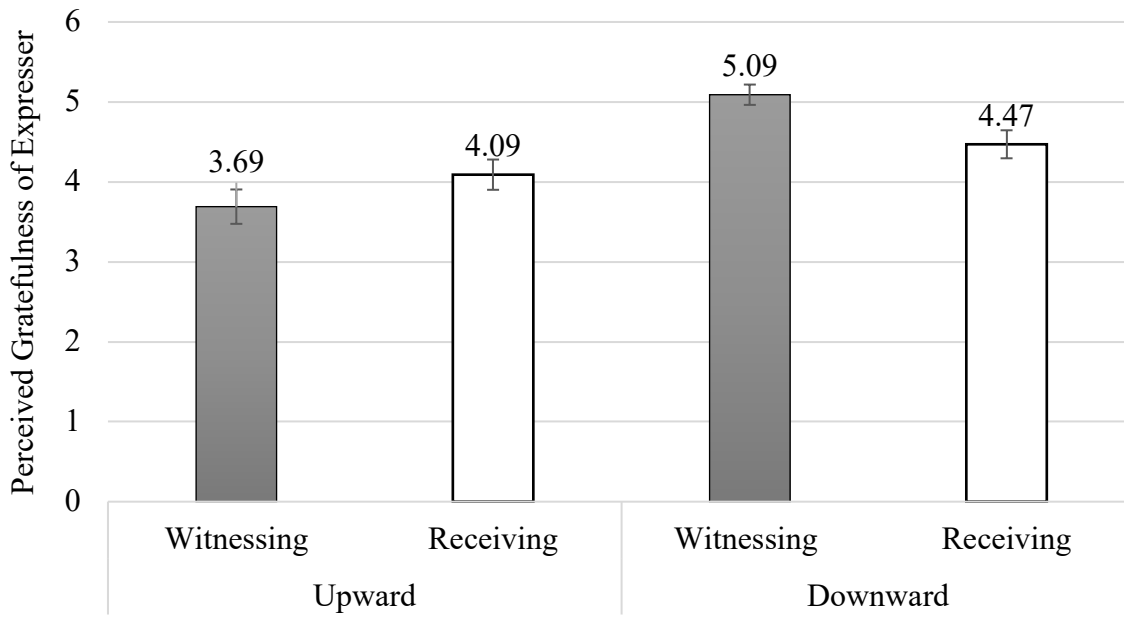


Figure 9

Means of Perceived Emotional Authenticity by Condition in Study 2

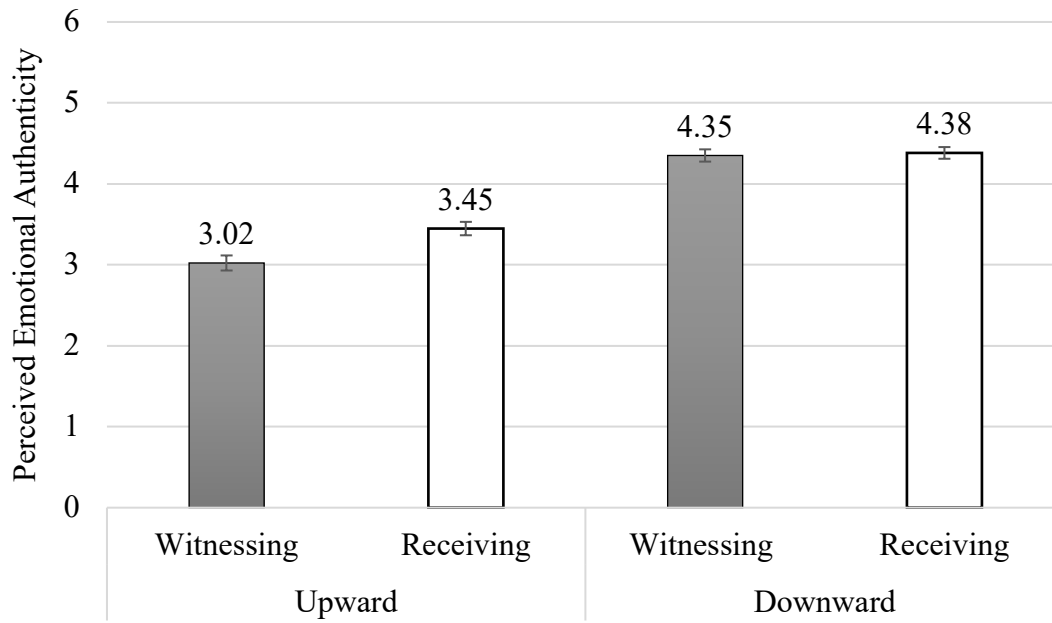


Figure 10

Means of Desire to Affiliate with Expresser by Condition in Study 2

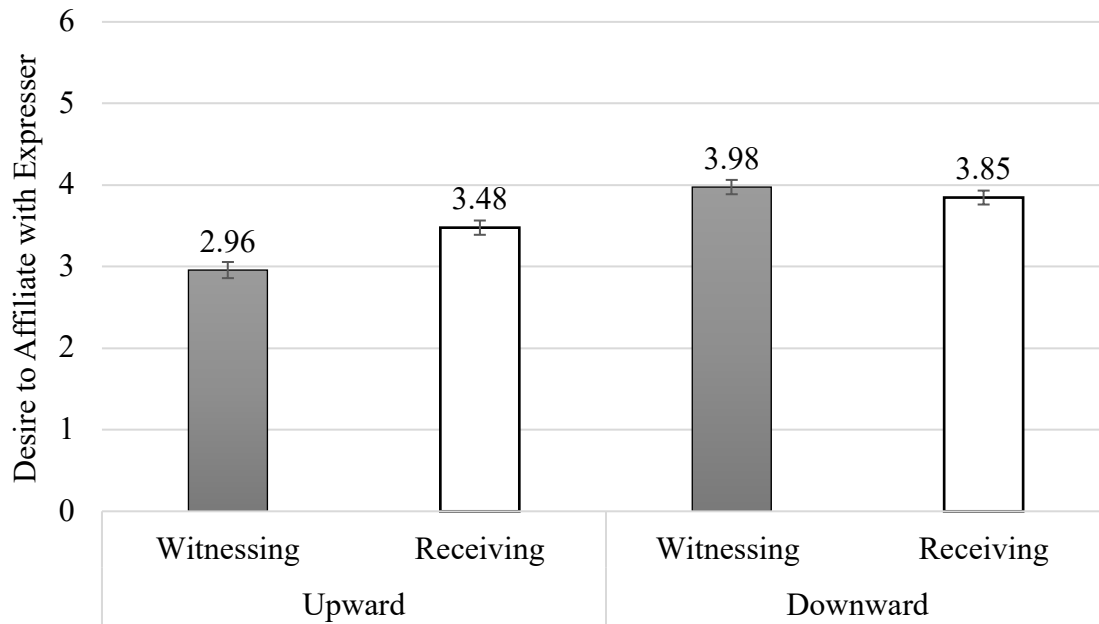
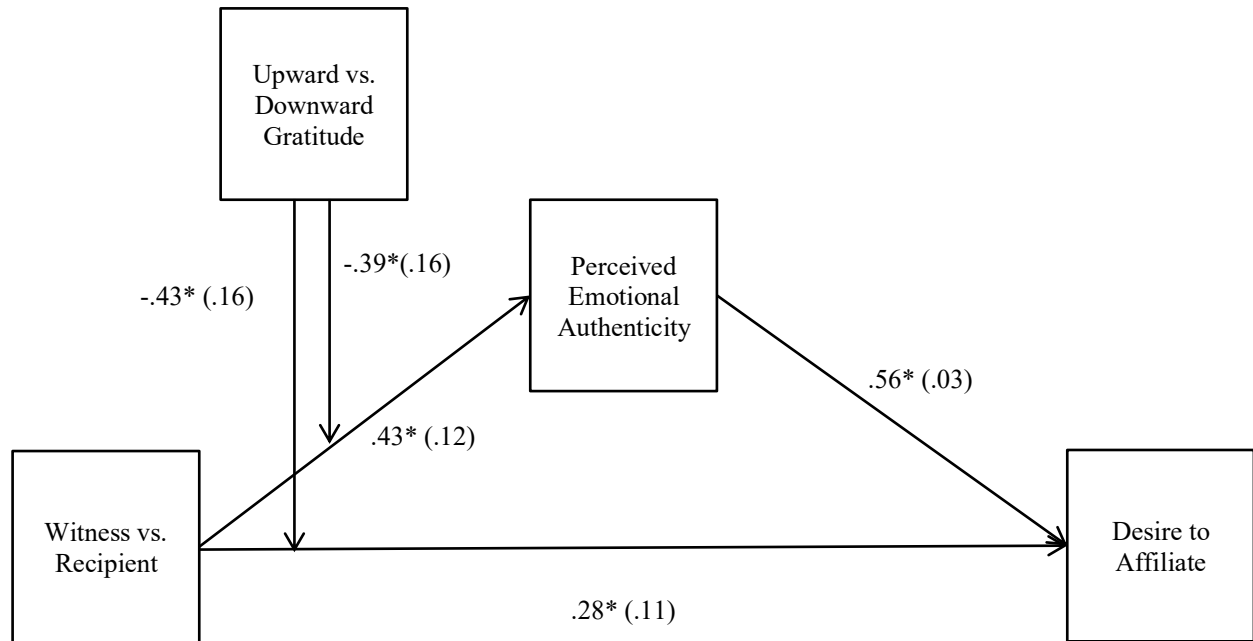


Figure 11

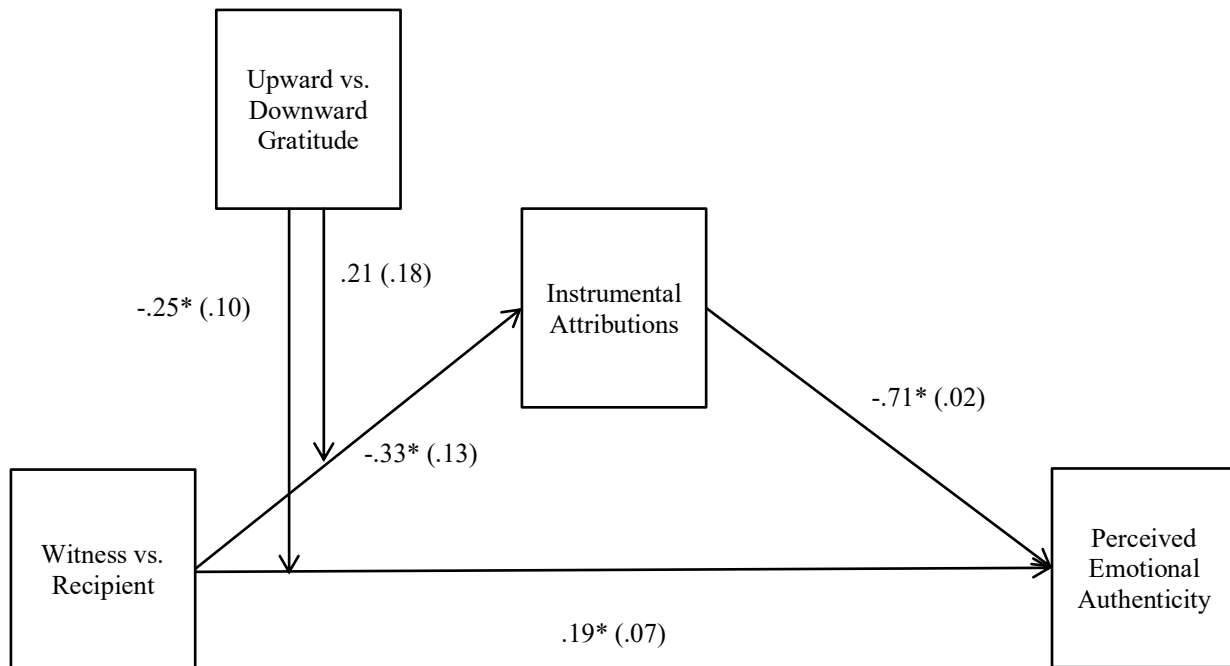
Moderated Mediation Model of Conditions Predicting Desire to Affiliate through Perceived Emotional Authenticity in Study 2



Note. $*p < .05$.

Figure 12

Moderated Mediation Model of Conditions Predicting Perceived Emotional Authenticity through Instrumental Attributions in Study 2



Note. $*p < .05$.

Figure 13

Means of Perceived Gratefulness of Expresser by Condition in Study 2

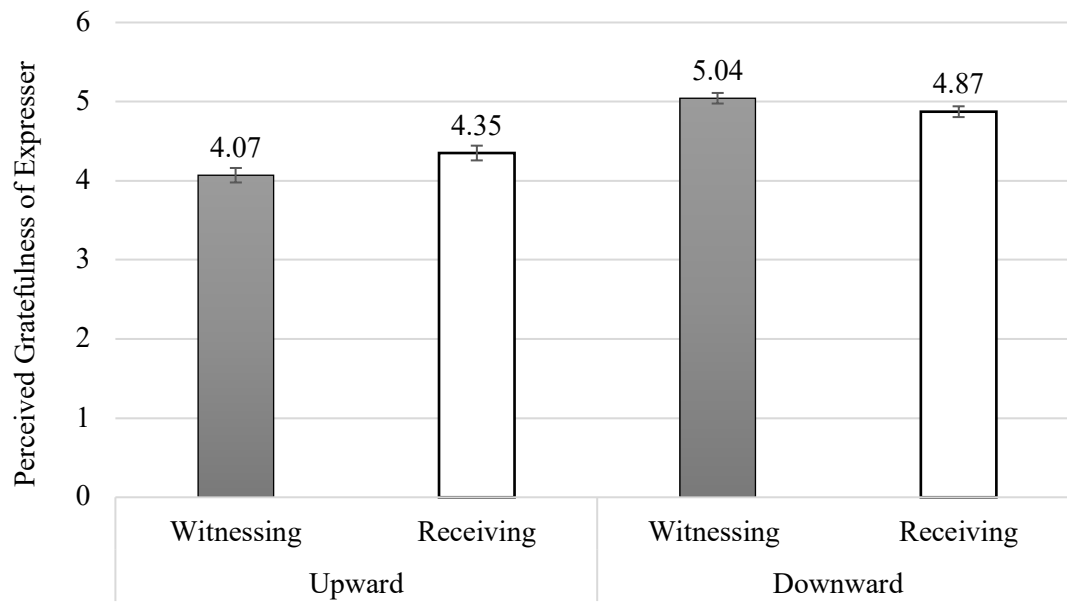


Figure 14

Overview of Study 3 Procedure

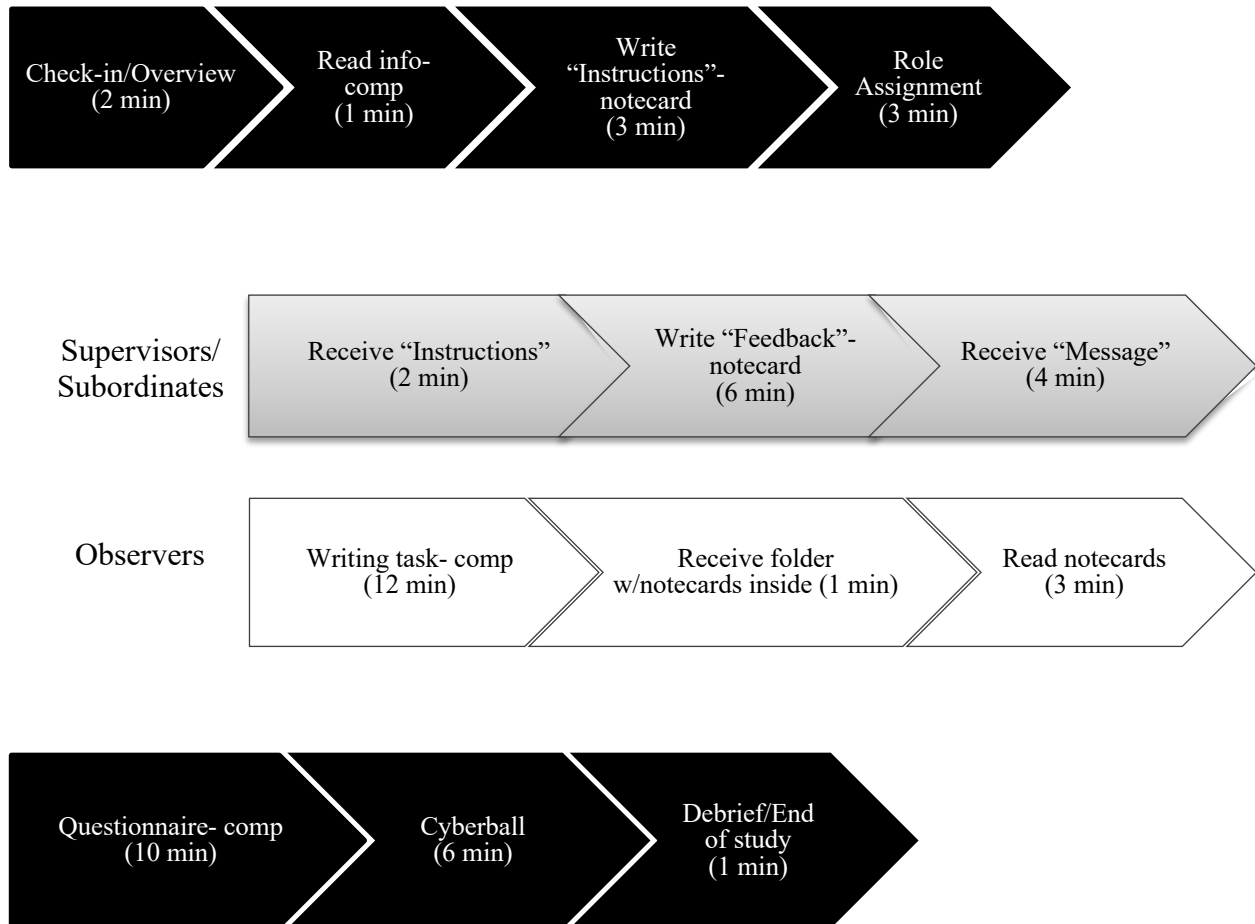


Figure 15

Means of Perceived Emotional Authenticity by Condition in Study 3

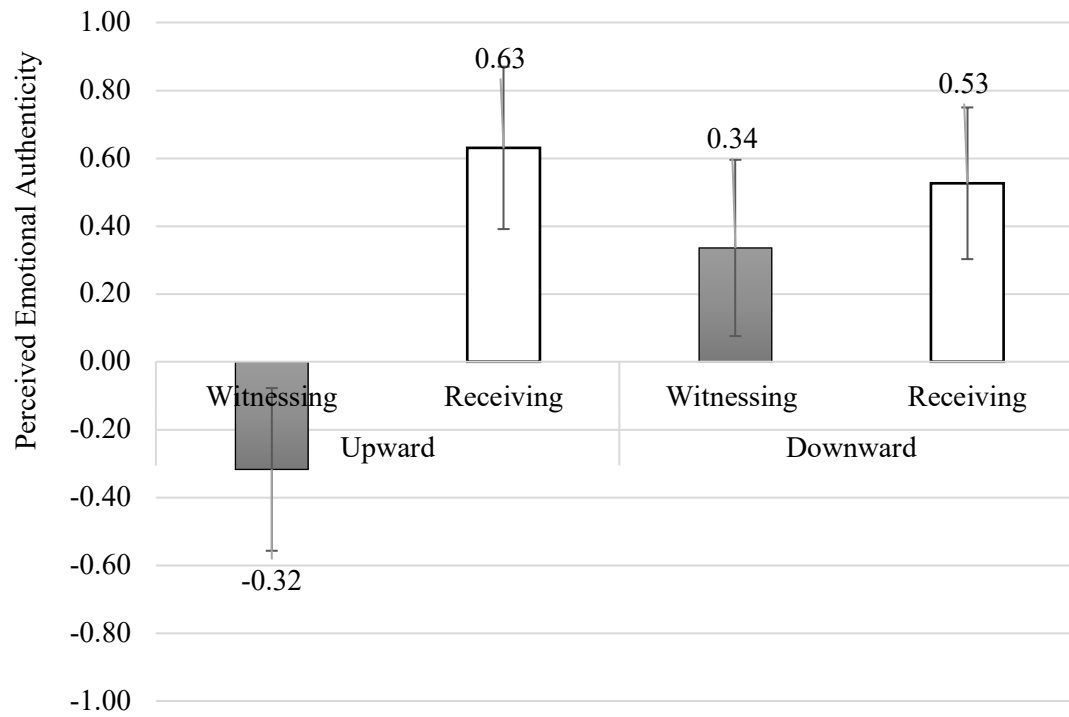


Figure 16

Percentage of People Who Chose to Work with their Respective Subordinate/Supervisor Gratitude Expresser on the Next Task by Condition in Study 3

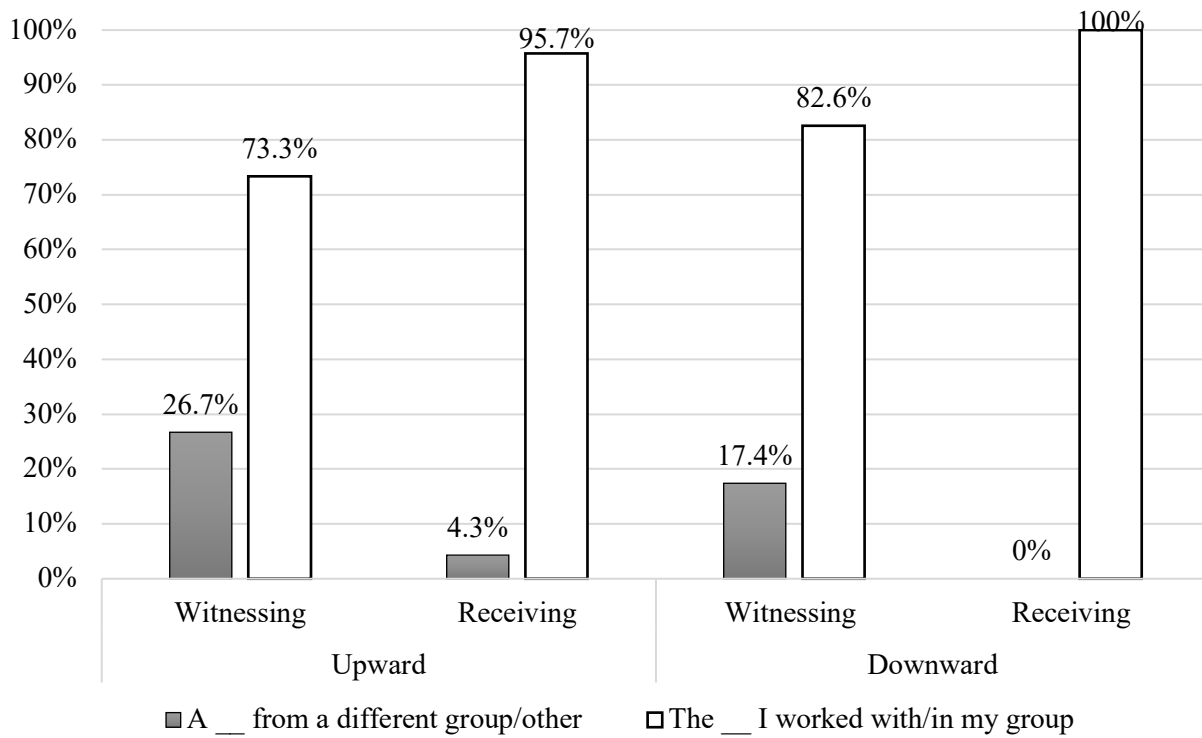
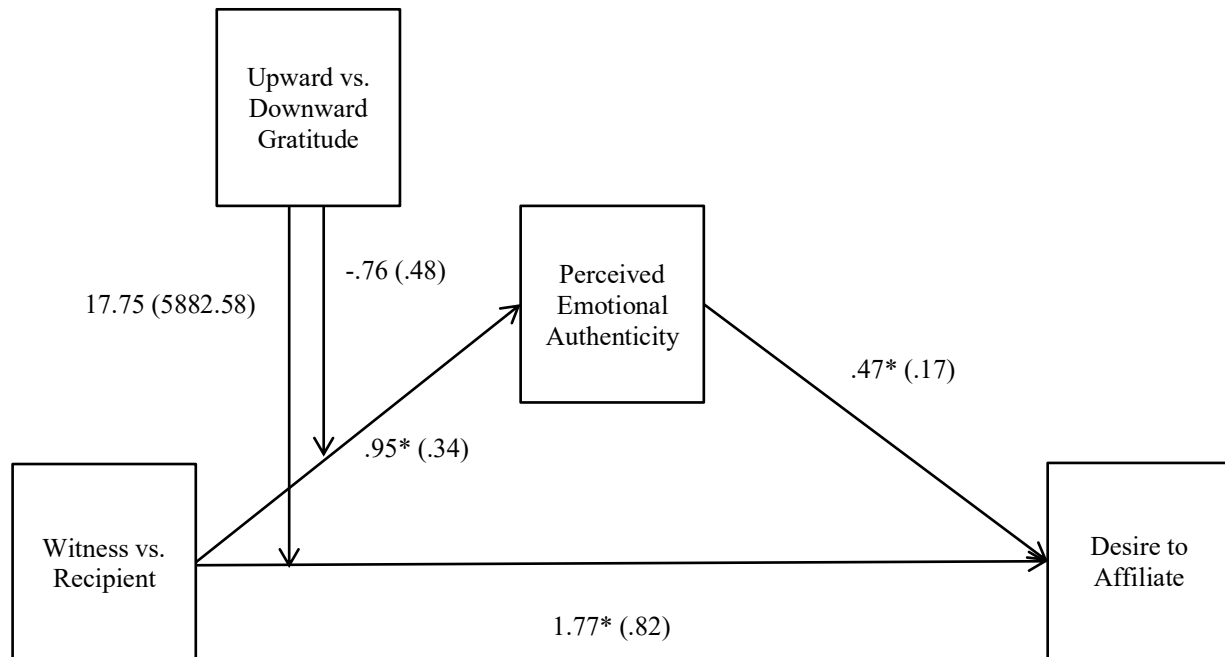


Figure 17

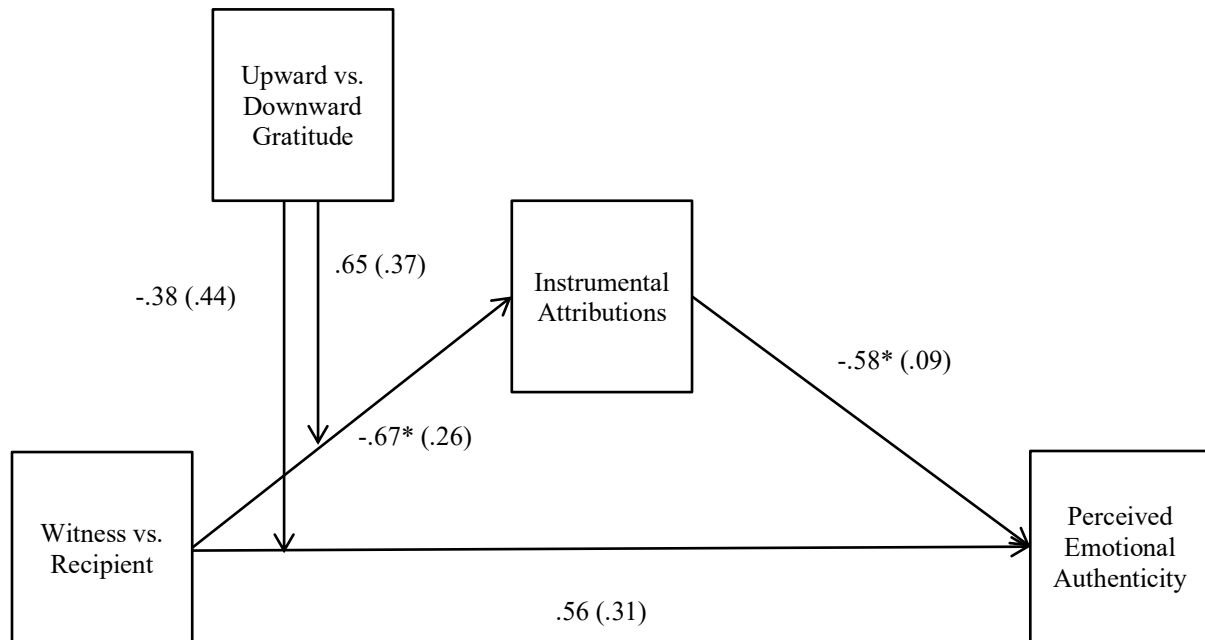
Moderated Mediation Model of Conditions Predicting Desire to Affiliate through Perceived Emotional Authenticity in Study 3



Note. * $p < .05$.

Figure 18

Moderated Mediation Model of Conditions Predicting Perceived Emotional Authenticity through Instrumental Attributions in Study 3



Note. * $p < .05$.

APPENDIX 1: SURVEY MATERIALS FOR PRELIMINARY STUDY

IMAGINE THAT YOU WITNESS A **PROFESSOR/STUDENT** EXPRESSING GRATITUDE TO A **STUDENT/PROFESSOR**.

1. How authentic would you perceive that “thank you” to be? Please circle your answer below:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Not at all authentic			Neutral			Very authentic

2. To what extent would you want to interact with that **professor/student** in the future? Please circle your answer below:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Not at all			Neutral			Definitely

3. What gender do you identify with? Please circle your answer below:

Man	Woman	Let me specify: _____
-----	-------	-----------------------

APPENDIX 2: SURVEY MATERIALS FOR STUDY 1 & MANIPULATION VALIDATION STUDY

STUDY 1

Instructions:

On the next page, you will be presented with a hypothetical scenario. Please read the short scenario in its entirety and visualize yourself at this workplace.

After you read the scenario, you will answer questions related to it. Please answer as honest and truthfully as possible. Be sure to imagine yourself in the situation while you are answering the questions.

Please continue to the next page when you are ready.

UPWARD

*John is a **junior staff member** at Wisdom House, a local publishing company. In his capacity as junior staff member, John has little power and influence in the organization. He lacks valuable information that other organization members do. John must report to his supervisor, who can reward or punish him, for instance, by granting or withholding him vacation days.*

RECIPIENT

*Imagine that **you are John's supervisor** at Wisdom House. As you were in your office working yesterday, imagine that John stopped by and said the following to you:*

WITNESS

*Imagine that **you witnessed** the following scene at Wisdom House. John stopped by his supervisor's office yesterday and said the following:*

*"Thank you for being such a wonderful **boss**. You always go out of your way to help the company and you work really hard. I'm thankful to be working with you."*

DOWNWARD

*John is a **supervisor** at Wisdom House, a local publishing company. In his capacity as a supervisor, John has considerable power and influence in the organization. He has access to valuable information that few other organization members have. John's subordinates must report to him, and he has the power to reward or punish them, for instance, by granting or withholding vacation days.*

RECIPIENT

*Imagine that **you are one of John's subordinates** at Wisdom House. As you were in your office working yesterday, imagine that John stopped by and said the following to you:*

WITNESS

*Imagine that **you witnessed** the following scene at Wisdom House. John stopped by one of his subordinate's offices yesterday and said the following:*

*"Thank you for being such a wonderful **employee**. You always go out of your way to help the company and you work really hard. I'm thankful to be working with you."*

Perceived emotional authenticity

9 ITEMS (study 1 $\alpha = .949$; study 2 $\alpha = .951$)

Scale of 0 (*not at all*) to 6 (*completely*)

1. John is probably faking how he feels. (PA1rc)
2. John is probably pretending, or putting on an act. (PA2rc)
3. Overall, I would say this expression of gratitude is probably fake. (PA3rc)
4. John's expression of gratitude is probably manipulative. (PA4rc)
5. John's expression of gratitude is probably strategic. (PA5rc)
6. John's expression of gratitude is probably sincere. (PA6)
7. John's expression of gratitude is probably genuine. (PA7)
8. Overall, I would say this expression of gratitude is probably authentic. (PA8)
9. Overall, I would say this expression of gratitude is probably real. (PA9)

Instrumental attributions [Study 2 only]

7 ITEMS ($\alpha = .946$)

Scale of -3 (*strongly disagree*) to +3 (*strongly agree*)

1. I believe that John said that message to benefit himself.
2. I believe that John said that message to be manipulative.
3. I believe that John said that message to be strategic.
4. I believe that John said that message to show himself in the best possible light.
5. I believe that John said that message to gain approval.
6. I believe that John said that message to get ahead in the organization.
7. John had an alternative motive for why he expressed gratitude.

Affiliation

4 ITEMS (study 1 $\alpha = .965$; study 2 $\alpha = .965$)

Scale of 0 (*not at all*) to 6 (*completely*)

1. I would enjoy meeting John. (meet)
2. I would enjoy spending time with John. (spendtime)
3. I think I would enjoy being around John. (bearound)
4. John seems to be someone I would choose to be around. (choose)

Perceived gratefulness of expresser

3 ITEMS (study 1 $\alpha = .950$; study 2 $\alpha = .939$)

Scale of 0 (*not at all*) to 6 (*very much so*)

1. John felt GRATEFUL (grateful)
2. John felt APPRECIATIVE (apprec)
3. John felt THANKFUL (thankful)

Thank you for completing this study! Your time and effort are very much appreciated!

MANIPULATION VALIDATION STUDY

Instructions:

On the next page, you will be presented with a hypothetical scenario. Please read the short scenario in its entirety and visualize yourself at this workplace. After you read the scenario, you will answer questions about it.

Imagine that you work at a local company. While at work today, you hear the following message:

*“Thank you for being such a wonderful (**boss/employee/co-worker/person**). You always go out of your way to help the company and you work really hard. I’m thankful to be working with you.”*

Emotion ratings

Scale of 0 (*not at all*) to 6 (*completely*)

How much did the message express the following emotions?

1. Gratefulness
 2. Appreciativeness
 3. Thankfulness
 4. Happiness
 5. Joy
 6. Confidence
 7. Pride
 8. Nervousness
 9. Anxiety
 10. Anger
 11. Frustration
-

Thank you for completing this study! Your time and effort are very much appreciated!

APPENDIX 3: SURVEY MATERIALS FOR STUDY 3

Gratitude Expression:

To [Supervisor/Subordinate],

I just wanted to let you know I received your feedback.
THANK YOU so much for taking the time to write that! I am
really grateful!

Perceived emotional authenticity

7 ITEMS ($\alpha = .975$)

Scale of -3 (*strongly disagree*) to +3 (*strongly agree*)

1. The _____ was probably faking how they feel.
2. The _____ was probably pretending, or putting on an act.
3. Overall, I would say that the _____'s expression was probably fake.
4. The _____'s expression was probably sincere.
5. The _____'s expression was probably genuine.
6. Overall, I would say the _____'s expression was probably authentic.
7. Overall, I would say the _____'s expression was probably real.

Instrumental attributions

3 ITEMS ($\alpha = .758$)

Scale of -3 (*strongly disagree*) to +3 (*strongly agree*)

1. The _____ sent that message to benefit themselves.
2. The _____ sent that message because they were being manipulative.
3. The _____ sent that message because they were being strategic.

Work with on next task

1 ITEM

1. Who would you like to interact with on a task later in the session?
 - a. Subordinate/Supervisor from different group
 - b. The subordinate/supervisor I worked with/in my group
 - c. Other _____

Social inclusion (Cyberball game)

[Played a “ball-tosing” game online via Inquisit software with the other “2” participants they were paired with in the session]

Perceived helpfulness of instructions

1 ITEM

Scale of 0 (*not at all helpful*) to 6 (*extremely helpful*)

1. How helpful was the subordinate's/supervisor's set of instructions?

Comprehension and manipulation check questions

Please think back to the interaction via the notecards and answer the following questions:

1. What emotion did the supervisor/subordinate express in the last message?
2. Who was the [supervisor/subordinate] sending the message to?
 - a. their supervisor/subordinate
 - b. another subordinate
 - c. another supervisor
 - d. observer
3. Relative to the person who sent the last message, how much power do you have over them?
 - a. I have more power than they do
 - b. I have less power than they do
 - c. We have equal amounts of power
 - d. I am not sure
 - e. I do not have a power role

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